THE ELITE MINORITY PRINCES OF INDIA

SHER ALI PATAUDI



PRINCESS INDIRA OF BARODA
HER HIGHNESS MAHARANI OF COOCH BEHAR

Prince of
India & General of
Pakistan

THE ELITE MINORITY
PRINCES OF INDIA

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By

SHER ALI PATAUDI

'The Supreme art is not to succeed but to know when to stop'

I write and write and write — not in vain,
But really only to remain — sane.

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Portrait painted by: A. Janniaur. Paris, 1932.

Dedicated to

Ayesha

In affection and admiration and promises made to her and MA

&

To all those who are part of the story

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The acknowledgement part has always been difficult to write with most of my books, particularly with this Saga. Those who were kind enough to assist in its taking the present form are many. Practically all of them, have not been keen to be 'recognized' — for modesty or for shyness I do not know. So I cannot mention all the names that I would like to have mentioned. But I am mentioning those without whom this book would not have seen the light of the day.

The typewriter and I have never got on together in spite of all my efforts. Writing to me is like weaving a carpet. A machine made carpet is not the same thing as a carefully hand made one.

Jim Elliot (Major General J.G.) took much trouble to go through the manuscript with his usual care and I cannot thank him enough. Major Dar corrected the typewritten copy, an ordeal not to be envied as most of the typists here type write without being proficient in English. I must thank Qudsia Akhtar for her 'reading' and computer help, for bringing all the elements of the book together, for it to have taken the form which it has. Begum Saira Ahmed, (known to all of us as Sweetie) has taken a personal interest for correcting typographical errors, as well as editing.

My publisher, Mobin Mahmud also took personal interest in the compilation and setting of both the 1st as well as this 2nd edition. And finally but not the last, nor the least, my wife who read the final draft, with all the innumerable small mistakes. This in spite of her many preoccupations, and my neglect of her during the writing, has laboriously read the Saga and made valuable suggestions.

Foreward

By Field Marshal Sir Richard Hull
K.G. G.C.B. D.S.O.

I have known the author for some forty years so was delighted to accept when he asked me to write a foreword for his new book on India.

I spent some seven years with my Regiment 17/21st Lancers in India before World War II in Secunderbad, Meerut & Quetta.

The historical part of the book is very good & I thoroughly recommend it to anyone wanting to study the birth of present day India & Pakistan.

I am not so well qualified to comment on the chapters about the Princes, but I found them fascinating reading.

That on Kashmir brought back to me many happy hours umpiring on the Delhi Durbar Polo grounds in the late 1930s.

R. Hull
F.M.
1-12-88

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a Saga of a large fraternity, about 565 of them. Some as large as France, some small principalities, like the size of the German ones that produced the Prince Consort and the Battenburgs. Others were smaller like the estate of a Country House. But they all claimed kingship.

This pattern was as confusing as the stars in the sky, large and small and smaller, but stars all the same. They came into being, as I found them, after 1857, when the Honourable British East India Company was rolled up and the Crown became the Head; the British Government assumed all responsibilities of this Universe as the Sun — the Paramount Power.

It took some time before the British got over the shock of 1857-1858 mutiny. When they saw the untidy pattern of these states they thought of tidying it up but by that time they had all become the dear children of Queen Victoria, who assumed the title of the Empress of India, in 1877, no one could be touched 'even if it be the size of a handkerchief'. That was the end of that.

Later, during the World War II, an attempt was made by some enlightened kind souls in Whitehall, who could foresee what could happen after the war, in India and in other colonies and wanted to do something for 'these poor chaps'. But nothing came out of that either.

The end of the war brought its changes, as all wars do, and the British brought in a Labour Party and Mr. Attlee became the Prime Minister. The British public wanted change, such a natural thing to do, and they realised only after it was all over that they had bowled out Churchill in the process, the man who had won a war for them. Such was the mood and the haste at the time. Mr. Attlee who had been a member of the Simon Commission that visited India in 1928, knew all about India, so he thought. He was in a hurry to settle 'the wretched' India question. To do that he was not inclined to tolerate any 'belly aching' by the Princes. When Wavell the soldier Viceroy, pointed out that something must be done for the Princes who had been so loyal to the Crown for so long, throughout the two World Wars, he was told to pack up and come home at the earliest possible moment, with his outdated ideas. And a person with unlimited ambition was sent out in haste to accomplish the job. He was the great grandson of Queen Victoria, through a daughter, belonging to the fraternity and so considered the right man to handle 'this crowd'.

He did a magnificent job. He moved so fast that these poor chaps didn't even know whether 'they' were going or staying. Treaties became scraps of paper and promises outdated emotional outbursts. He returned after doing his operation and was showered with flowers of honour and orders, having left behind a million dead and ten times as many homeless. 'So what? There were so many of them.' More chaos was left behind than the one they inherited when they came to trade and eventually they found that they had to Rule, to trade properly; they took on the White man's burden. 'Mad dogs and Englishmen', but there was method in their madness.

This book had to be selective for obvious reasons. In the end only a few of them really mattered in practical politics. It suited me to bring out the lessons I wanted to bring out by selecting the few I have. They are the ones that left the deepest mark. The others were very much a part of the same Crown, smaller jewels, but jewels all the same and some with much bigger hearts. I knew so many of them. But they needed a book to themselves. It would have been unfair to have just mentioned them here and there — they could not be thorns in roses.

Some might say that it is yet another autobiography. Of course it is. Every book in some ways is an autobiography of the author, in some it is clear in others it is veiled. I write directly because it is my style. I write more what I feel than what I imagine or observe. The combination of these produces the writing of this story.

And finally I write for myself. Most people do that. But few admit it. I am happy when others read and enjoy my writing. It gives a satisfaction that wipes out all the fatigue and headaches of writing. It gives a sense of accomplishment and achievement which is the best vitamin in life. I write to remain sane in the world which I live in.

INTRODUCTION

I have been motivated to write this book about the Princes of India by that spark which injustice produces. Here were these people, individuals, 565 states big and small, who were created and preserved by the British to act as a cushion between them and British India. Their area was called Native India shown on the map as yellow, while that of the British was shown red, till the Revolution in Russia in 1917, after which the red was diluted to pink. These rulers were controlled by the Political Department under the Viceroy, in New Delhi, through the Political Secretary, by the regional Residents, who guided them in the hour of need. The need could be for good or bad. If a certain Ruler was too progressive then he had to be checked in case an imbalance was caused in the adjoining British territory. Or when he had to be pulled up for misbehaviour causing embarrassment to the authority of the Paramount Power.

It is surprising to note that after the establishment of the Chamber of Princes in 1921 no effort was made to persuade or even coerce all of them to join and work for a common cause, in which lay the security of all. If there was any sincerity in the India Act of 1917, in which it was categorically stated that it was the policy of the British Government to grant Dominion status to India, then surely the position of the Princes should have been kept in a wishful vacuum. The 'big guns' (the big 5 states of 21 gunners) should have been told that after the Paramountcy passed to the elected government, British Crown would be in no position to guarantee the status quo.

The Princes had got so used to living in fantasy that a number of them had asked, "Will they go?" Surely they should have known that every war has brought a change. Why should this one be different? But they lived in a world of their own. And their world went when they went.

Since Partition many books have come out about the Raj in India. Raj means rule. A number of them have described the British Raj; some wrote about the life they led with nostalgia. One or two Princes, who were the Native Raj, have brought out books to portray the palaces and the manner in which they lived. Two Maharanis, both now Raj-Matas (Queen Mothers) have written about themselves, their families and their politics. The latter eventually landed them in jails, on trumped-up charges, because their political views were opposed to those of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. And then there were 'others' who wrote to sell. Most of them belonging to the category, who after a quick visit, write with such authority. They paint such a picture of extravagance that it is untrue; none I know had a chariot of gold, or dressed up adorned with jewels for a cocktail party. Some have been portrayed as spoilt imbeciles. Some of them were very able and sober. Sad!

I have written to the best of my ability with a different approach. Part—I deals with the background, showing how the Princes came into being and how they were 'ruled' by the Viceroy through the Political Department. Part—II briefly gives the story of my association with some of them and very briefly of those whom I met, and who left a mark. To write at any length about them would need volumes.

This book is in a way the continuation of my last book, 'Quest of Identity'.

This also is a Quest......

> **Hey justju ke khub se hey khubtar kahan**
> **Ab therti hey dekhiye ja kar nazar kahan**
> *Now the quest is, where is the excellence of the most beautiful... Where.*
> *Now the thing to see is where this eye will settle... Where?* (S. A.)

Now a bit about myself, who am I? This is also essential, the reader must know the background of the author. I was born in 1913, the second son of the Ruler of Pataudi and throughout my life I have been on terms of personal friendship with a number of these Princes of India.

I have always been a lonely person, but this solitude is not the same as living alone. Many a time I have been so lonely in the midst of banqueting halls under glittering chandeliers, and in receptions crammed like sardines, where everyone feels that he must talk, or say something, even if it be utter nonsense and smile. When all that one really wants to do is to be alone or shriek or to start crying, through desperation for not being able to be alone and then be wherever one wants to be.

I also like attractive women, who doesn't but I learnt from experience that one mustn't be too rash about them, they can also have some hidden secrets, like loneliness, or methods of escape from the current problems that they may be facing and we all have our problems. Many a time I have landed myself in problems,

which weren't mine but that of the lady, but I was sober enough to believe what she said was true and quite forgot that drink takes you to the world of fantasies as well. But the difficult ones were the ones who took you to the dark depths of their world of the heart. They were interesting studies to a man like me but many a time I was shocked to see them the next morning looking and behaving like quite different people. Such people live in two worlds, one of the day, one of the night, they may have more worlds than two, because it is all a question of mind and the amount of 'aid' that one has taken to escape from the situation at the time. I was very tempted to take a peep into those worlds but some force always pulled me back. What that force is, is something I don't know and yet that would not be absolutely correct, because I am conscious of the fact that there is something, not visible to touch but something inside that puts on a kind of a brake just as I am about to take a plunge into the other world.

Naturally what I could do when I was young, I can't do now. Certainly I possessed perception then which would be difficult to capture now. But the mind can remain young and that is all that really matters, even contentment, the greatest blessing of the Being, is a state of mind. I was at the climax of initiations and enthusiasm, then. Discipline is a good thing in life but for a soldier it is vital. It helps him a lot later on his life. I found to my satisfaction that something that says inside, 'this is not done', is enough to put you off the target, when you have taken your aim and then run for it. I learnt that, as one of the principles of camouflage at Camouflage School at Poona half a century back, while you can't turn a factory into a haystack, but by breaking the lines you can create doubt in the mind of the pilot on the bombing run. Like, if caught in the open, remain still. What catches the eye is the movement. Simple fact of life, which few apply in life. But then one of the most difficult things I find today is a simple life. We live for making our lives complicated on account of others. Simple things are so difficult to understand sometimes. A simple minded person in this complicated world is the most difficult person to fathom.

I had promised myself that I would write about the Princes of India one day. To understand their story, it is necessary to go back to 1840s when the Hon. East India Company began to expand over India in a big way. Decisions taken were influenced by events leading up to and subsequent to 1857. And mistakes, then made in policy, were never really put right. No serious effort was made to persuade the Princes to organise themselves as a coherent political force, with which the Government would have to deal on an equal footing as with the major political parties of the country. A great opportunity was let slip by which, if it had been seized, would have resulted in a very different India, and Pakistan, from what exists today.

It is a vast subject, so much has been written about them by so many and yet justice has not been done to them, not to those who deserved some anyway. There were so many of them that the good got mixed up with the not so good, the outstanding ones got lost in the crowd of mediocrites, the big ones were few, very few; they stood aloof in most things by themselves refusing to be identified with 'others'.

They were supposed to rule 2/5th of the territory of India but this was only by the grace of God and the Paramount Power. Not a single one was independent, including the Faithful Ally of the British Government, His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, as is so clear from the Viceroy's (Lord Reading at the time) letter dated 27th March, 1927. To him, 'The sovereignty of British Crown is supreme in India and therefore no Ruler of an Indian State can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing.... The right of British

Government to intervene in the 'internal affairs of Indian States is another instance of the consequences necessarily involved in the supremacy of the British Crown... But I do not think I need pursue the subject further. I will merely add that the title 'Faithful Ally' which Your Exalted Highness enjoys has not the effect of putting your Government in a category separate from that of other States under the paramountcy of the British Crown'.

I have been a very fortunate person, a privileged person, in a sea of starving people. I saw the earlier part of my life from a hilltop, which gave a better view of the countryside as a whole; I saw a great deal of it in the company of those people about whom I am writing — the princes. By an accident of birth, I belonged to this fraternity as well. And I soon discovered one common factor among them — they were all tarred with the same brush — big, not so big and small. Belonging to this category I had no difficulty in mixing with them all. The big thought I was from their class because I had no complex of any sort over the subject. 'The not so big' took me as an equal and liked me, but I could not compete with them because I did not have the means which they had. The smaller ones observing me, seeing with whom I moved with and associated with, took me to be superior and gave me the place due to such a category. I had the best of the three worlds. The thing I think that made me what I became, was a feeling that I must have something in me that they liked which gave me a mental approach of a healthy complex — neither superior nor inferior. Besides good fortune playing its part, I was not only accepted as a good soldier but became a lucky one as well, that meant success and nothing succeeds like success. There were many good and able 'generals' in the field but they were perhaps not so lucky. I had a great deal to thank my Creator for.

The subject is not so easy as it sounds: 'The Princes of India as I know them.' The difficulty is that one cannot tell lies and yet all truth cannot be told either. I have a weakness, I am not a hypocrite. This has landed me in great problems on a number of occasions. On top of that I have inherited from my mother a very independent mind. I can't say what I have inherited from my father because I did not know him, I was very young when he died, but old enough, out of the cradle, to remember flashes of his face. He was a 'beautiful' man, with a very fair complexion and dark blue eyes, almost effeminately handsome with jet black hair.

With such parents to give me my identity I was bound to be all right in this privileged class. I find today that when I am assessing them I am doing it with the feeling of an equal. I find that I never had complexes when I moved among them. The same way I never had any complex about the white man, in my land, or outside. I just took them as equals. All humanity should be equal — this of course I learnt much later.

I was brought up as a strict Muslim from the age of seven. I went through the rituals of Namaz (prayers) when others snored. I studied the books of Islam when others did some work. I was taught accountability very early — from His Regent as well — my mother. She was the Regent of the State for 13 years. She was a very able and strong Regent. As a result of it all, as a habit, I never smoked and never drank. A habit that has not left me even now. I may have gone through this penance earlier because of religion but today I stick to this habit because it is a good habit and has saved me a lot of money and headaches. And today I do think that it is not so much the drink that is 'haram' (forbidden) but the intoxication of the mind that it brings about. Anything that causes confusion or imbalance of the mind should be haram, even if it be good food. I find that I did not miss it in the career that I adopted and in the society in which I moved. In fact this was appreciated though some showed jealousy. I became a soldier without drinking and I was

very quickly promoted in rank without smoking. Later when I became a soldier-diplomat — a Service Attache soon after the war, I found it irksome not to drink, not because of an urge to drink but because at times I found myself so out of place at my own party.

Reverting to my main subject of Princes, these Highnesses were of all kinds and all religions, they were Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and even some agnostics, but dare not say it. Hindu and Sikh rulers had Muslim subjects and the Muslims likewise had non-Muslim subjects. As far as it was apparent then, to them all subjects were equal and equal opportunities were offered at all. They respected their subjects' beliefs. In non-Muslim company, I, a Muslim, never felt at any time embarrassed or out of place. Like in the highest of the 'white' company I never felt unequal, the credit must also go to the white with whom I associated because they represented the Paramount Power at the time. Some of them were snobbish, I am told, but thank God I never crossed paths with them. But then they themselves belonged to a different category. It was all a question of backgrounds and environments. Today I am a humble man but the biggest snob among snobs.

It was for this fortunate life and parents, really my mother, that I developed into what I did. No one would believe that a sane and sober person would refuse to serve under a Corps Commander in the field, in war, because he had heard that his Corps Commander had allegedly passed a remark which he considered an insult. This is exactly what I did in 1943; I sat down and wrote a representation to the highest authority, the C-in-C in New Delhi. My C.O. was horrified but I insisted on it. Within six days I was ordered to report to G.H.Q. I received the highest priority by Air, when there were queues a mile long. On the seventh day I was before the C-in-C who asked me if I would like to join his battalion, the Ist Battalion of the Ist Punjab Regiment — the oldest unit of the entire British Indian Army. No 'Native' had crossed the threshold of this unit in that rank upto now. And within the year I was commanding this unit — the youngest commanding officer of the Army. What did all this mean? I still don't know. But one thing I do know, that there is no stronger force than truth. I had said what I felt and the man on top appreciated it. The man being a big man and a great gentleman-soldier-Auchinleck, who had written on my representation 'any officer who is not upright and a national is not worth having.' But it is 'the Being' right on top in the high skies, that ordained it. It is this kind of inherent belief that gives you the confidence, before which nothing can stand. But the cause has to be noble and honest.

The object of all this is to tell the reader what kind of a person I am. That in spite of all this I went to Pakistan, leaving my mother, my only brother and all my dear friends and associates, all that makes one's life. Behind here, in India, on a holiday, from where I have started writing this book (Jaipur) — I ask why did I go? Because I believed that the manner in which the British had ruled us and the way in which we had accepted their separate electorate scheme of Lord Minto in 1909, it had become inevitable that a Muslim Sovereign State was to be established in the subcontinent so that the Muslims could rule somewhere in this subcontinent, where they had been rulers for nearly a thousand years. I had never had any complex about this vital decision that I took in Washington D.C. when I was India's Services Attache at the Embassy. My successor (Biju Kaul) was flown out to take over from me. I returned to Delhi by Air on the 8th of August and signed my paper on the 9th of August, 1947. I went to Pataudi to see the family and on the 14th of August I flew to Calcutta and then beyond to attend the Canberra Peace Treaty Talks with Japan as a Brigadier. This was the very first delegation to be sent by Pakistan. I scored a first again; the Being was kind enough again.

It is because I have always drawn my strength from truth that I have never disowned my friends in India. I never allowed associations to break. For this approach a person tried to label me with a heinous charge of suspicion of my loyalty; the person proved to be a politician in uniform who later promoted himself — to the highest rank of a Field Martial, having been returned from war area as temperamentally unfit for command of troops in action. But again truth prevailed. He had to bow out later with humiliation. Soon after this charge, the civilian government (Prime Minister Suhrawardy) announced the award of Hilal-i-Jurat to me and later I was appointed as Pakistan's First High Commissioner (Ambassador) to Malaya (the Prime Minister at that time was Malik Feroz Khan Noon). It paid to be honest and courageous. So sad that a soldier set this example — that anyone who disagreed with his view was a traitor. He even objected bitterly to my appointment as High Commissioner which objection was turned down by the Government. His letter was not even replied.

The history of the Princes of India, which I knew, is the history of the disintegration of the Moghul Empire, after Aurangzeb. He tried his best to re-establish the authority of the state but the relationship of the Ruler and the ruled had been upset by Akbar in his old age when he tried to find a political solution for unity through amalgamation, — synthesis of religion in the form of his Deen-i-Ilahi. By his tolerance he had created an atmosphere of acceptance of an alien Sovereign who was benevolent. But this meddling in religious affairs had put the back up of his own Muslim nobles and Muslim religious leaders and theologists. The Hindu leaders started feeling as equals and therefore two camps started in defence of their rights, in the court, even before Akbar's death. The rebellion later of Mahabat Khan who kept Emperor Jahangir, Empress Nur Jahan, in captivity for a while, till the rebellion, was amicably settled at the initiative of Sheikh Ahmad of Sirhind, a leading Muslim Saint and leader, and reformer of the time. Shahjahan who was of two-third Hindu blood from his mother's side, (his mother and his grand-mother were both Rajputanis, the former from Amber Jaipur and the latter from Jodhpur) had to act harshly when the Jats rose in rebellion on religious grounds and took the remains of Akbar out of the grave and put them to fire, claiming that he had died a Hindu. It is Shahjahan, Aurangzeb's father, who destroyed the temples and stopped new construction without permission, because the temples were being used by the rebels and even dacoits as a sanctuary. History has repeated itself with the action of the Indian Government against the Sikh rebels, who following the practice of Hindus, took refuge in the Golden Temple, in Amritsar. Did Mrs. Indira Gandhi take action because she was Prime Minister or because she was from a devout Brahmin Hindu family? There is no time and space here to go into all that. But what has happened in Amritsar on 5th June 1984, will also go down in the history of India as one of the major events. It is he (Shahjahan) who after his wife's death divided the Empire in four viceroyalties, for his four sons, and started the game of intrigues between them, a policy of divide and rule.

By that time Dara Shikoh, the eldest and the favourite of Shahjahan's sons, had been pushed into becoming the leader of the Hindu group. Aurangzeb, the puritan by nature, had become the rallying point of the Muslim fundamentalists. He was so disgusted by court intrigues that he retired to the hills of Deccan and became a hermit, till he was persuaded to come back, to save the Empire. His letters to his father are clear on the issue, but the Emperor paid no heed. In the end the three others — Shah Shuja (No. 2), Aurangzeb (No. 3) and Murad (No. 4) — formed an alliance to end the intrigue and to stop the Emperor from breaking the old tradition of the House of Taimur — by nominating his heir, in his lifetime. The tradition was that the nobles elected the ablest and once the majority vote-getter had been

proclaimed the Sovereign, he ordered the burial ceremony of the deceased monarch.

Here it would be relevant to point out that the reason why Aurangzeb (the Son) had put Shahjahan the Emperor (the Father) under house arrest for life was because of intrigues of divide and rule which shook the roots of the House of Taimur. It was only because of Aurangzeb that the Moghul Empire lasted as long as it did.

It was the ablest No. 3 Prince Aurangzeb, who led the team of three against Dara Shikoh, who had the father's army to support him. Support was on a personal basis. The Rajputs were divided. The ablest won and soon established his authority by ascending the throne — placing his father (Emperor Shahjahan) under Palace House Arrest, in the main royal section overlooking the river and the favourite balcony from where he had the clearest and best view of the Taj. After twelve years when he died he was placed in the grave next to his wife — the son giving the father a more ornate grave than his mother.

It may be remembered that Bairam Khan was the Regent and Sheikh Gondal, a Shi'a theologian, was the Sadr of the empire. The arrival of the Shi'as in large numbers, really took place with the return of Humayun from Persia; but can we complain against the presence of a group which has given to Muslim India men like Ghalib, Syed Amir Ali and Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah? They were all Shi'as by accidents of birth, but proved to be liberals in approach and respected all Fiqas. Mr. Jinnah holds a record in even his field, he tried for years for a Hindu-Muslim unity, till he was embittered by the rigid and bigoted approach of a certain section of Hindu society, and was driven towards the demand of a sovereign Muslim State in the subcontinent.

The Moghul Empire had to pay a very heavy price for its failure to develop a powerful navy after the Moghul conquest of the ports on the West coast and its supine acceptance of Portuguese supremacy in the Arabian Sea. This was one of the major causes of the inability of the Moghuls to withstand the foreigners from across the seas. Akbar was progressive and forward looking but even this was subject to many qualifications. He was greatly interested in the promotion of learning but curiously enough failed to grasp the importance of the printing press, which revolutionized the spread of knowledge in the West. It was introduced by the Portuguese during his lifetime, and in 1577, i.e. 28 years before his death, the first book was printed in India. It has to be acknowledged that the liberal policy followed during the Akbar Moghul period and has been his main glory.

It may be argued with great justice that Akbar set standards of liberalism unheard of in those days. It is true that the main glory of the Moghul Empire in the perspective of history is its tolerance and liberalism, if we forget that Akbar was unfair to the faith of his forefathers, but one regrets that 'this liberalism was not tempered with sufficient realism.

We must not forget that the aid given by Shah of Persia to Humayun for the reconquest of his throne in India, was on a specific promise that he would establish the Shi'a school of thought in the empire. The influence of the arrival of the Shi'as from Persia created sectarian and group jealousies which began to undermine the unity of the Muslims. In seeking support from dissident elements, Akbar weakened the foundations of his empire.

The Princess I knew and whose story I am relating were the inheritors of such indulgence. They wore jewels to show their wealth and strength, forgetting that their women folk did that too. They carried swords studded with jewels and delicate daggers stuck in their Cummerbunds, as a symbol of soldiering, but the habit made them a stranger to sword swinging itself. The dainty daggers were only of use

either to commit suicide or for a skirmish in the bed. The majority of them wore heavy twisted chains of gold round their ankles like their Ranis. Why all this effeminate posture? I think it had more to do with the manner in which they adorn their gods in India, rather than anything else, because they were semi-gods themselves.

They lasted so long because of the Paramount Power. It was really a question of scratching of backs more than anything else. When someone else (the Congress) started scratching the back of the Paramount Power, they turned to them for the scratch and the Princes were left with no one to scratch except the earth.

The phrase of 'Protection and Subordinate Co-operation' was let undefined to them and so the limitations within which 'advice' was to be given was not understood and prescribed and so the Indian States continued to remain at the mercy of the Executive Government of India, the real, Paramount Power, and its officers in the Political Department.

When the Executive Government changed, the Princes found themselves without the protection of the Crown and its link, the Viceroy. The surprising point to note is that they expected so much from the Crown, when the Crown in London itself had no power after the Cromwell Revolution of 1688 and what happened to Charles the First. It is the Parliament that was the power and in 1947 there was a Labour Government and no Churchill to bark at the naked Faqirs. The bigger they were, the more blind to realities they seemed. I had a talk with H. H. Kashmir on the subject in early 1947, he was quite alive to the developments around his state but was not clear on how to tackle the problem. He had no love for the Congress and no grudge against the Muslims. He had spent most of his life surrounded by the Muslims, but he knew no one in the Muslim League, and the Muslim Leaguers themselves considered Kashmir 'no problem' and were more concerned with Hyderabad, where they hadn't a hope at all. His Exalted Highness was not sure to the last whether the British would go or not. That is why he vacillated.

It is easy to sit judging events today. But the conditions in 1947 were changing very rapidly, from day to day. Mountbatten, by reducing the time from June 1948 to August 1947, had added to that confusion. Whether it was intentional or accidental only the Creator knew, but his action certainly gave no time to the Princes to get their heads together in the hurricane that was let loose. I found that the big ones, with their heads in sands, or jungles, or in their small hills, were hoping for the hurricane to pass somehow over their heads without taking them with it. The biggest of them all demonstrated his assessment of the time by declaring that he was independent and dreamed of buying his access to the sea. Proving how useless money is when things are not for sale. No wonder they disappeared without a whimper. The smaller ones hardly felt the change. The less you have the more independent you could be sometimes.

The problem of the Princes was a great one, with enormous potentialities for good or bad. It was important to both India and the British. There is a charge against the Paramount Power that it was indulgent with its pseudo-allies the Princes. And that it had not prepared them to take on the hurricane that was likely to build-up at the time of their withdrawal. There were enough wise old men in London to foresee what could happen. Whitehall was never so short of common sense at the time as when it was needed, so that today the progeny of their past allies — the princes — feel a terrible let down on their part to their fathers and grandfathers. They selected a 'Champion boy' according to Linlithgow — the Viceroy — to undo the Gordian knot. He had no real experience of the East. He was won over by the Congress who knew his weaknesses and gave him full rein to gloat in the Viceregal palace with his Bodyguards and hundreds of servants. He

fully realized the problem of the princes, but instead of giving more time to the allies, who had kept them in the subcontinent so long, he reduced the period, to force the issue of integration on them, they who had stood by them in 1857 and in the two World Wars, with no regard for their interests.

I remember so well in 1950 when the Lord Chamberlain called on H. H. Bhopal at Claridges. They were friends. The former had shot tigers in Bhopal and the latter grouse in Scotland. When the Lord Chamberlain said, "The Monarch knows you are here — aren't you going to call on him?" Bhopal had replied, "What would I say to him? What Dickie did to us? I cannot hurt him, I have regard for him. I am sure he tried to do the best for us.... " The bitterness was not hidden, couldn't be, and the distress was so apparent, all that Bhopal's friend could say was, "What a tragedy! How sad! He would understand. I'll explain it to him."

This is the time when I had just arrived in England to attend the J.S.S.C. (Joint Services Staff College) at Latimer and my wife and I were staying with him. The next day he had taken us both to Cannes and Monte Carlo for a fortnight — as a wedding present for us.

Partition produced a void between them and me. But we never allowed the association to break completely. Whenever we could we met abroad and we kept in touch by periodical letters. My mother did not keep good health, the separation was a source of great grief to her and yet she refused to leave the place, 'where your father and grandfather had brought me. I do not want to die away from Pataudi. I want to mix with the soil here.... " And so whenever I could, I flew back to Malaya or Indonesia (where I was Ambassador) via Delhi and stopped a day or two to see her and the friends who came to see me when they heard I was there — the children of my friends as well; they were so insistent on keeping the ties of the past continued — love and affection certainly have no geographical barriers. Love is not a thing but an idea, a feeling.

I joined the Central Cabinet in 1969 and soon got involved after that in the chasing of one's tail, as sometimes such duties involve. I took my responsibilities rather seriously and in addition to attending the UN meeting as leader of the Pakistan Delegation and other International Conferences like the First Foreign Ministers Conference in March 1970 in Jeddah where I proposed the establishment of the Islamic Secretariat, I kept addressing the people in both East and West Pakistan reminding them of the reason and how Pakistan came into being — in the relief that we are brother Muslims and are Pakistani first before we are other things because of much older, racial and ethnic identities. This made me unpopular; with two individuals — Mujib in the East and Bhutto in the West. Why I don't know because I was not aspiring to be the next Prime Minister. I was only reminding them of the Muslim link.

Being a student of history and never allowing myself to forget that the first Prime Minister (Liaqat Ali Khan) was assassinated, the second (Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din) dismissed, when he had a clear majority in the House, the third one (Mohammad Ali Bogra) just got shunted out at the point of a gun, the fourth (Ch. Mohammad Ali) resigned in disgust after getting the 1956 Constitution implemented, the fifth (H. S. Suhrawardy) hardly lasted for a year or so fighting the intrigues against his government, the sixth (I. I. Chundrigar) lasted only for a couple of months, the seventh (Firoz Khan Noon) was turned out as a result of 1958 Martial Law, the eighth (Z. A. Bhutto) was hanged, the ninth (M. K. Junejo) was dismissed together with the Parliament in 1987 and my wife, Begum Silvat Sher Ali Pataudi being a member of the National Assembly was out of a job. When she will be in a job again God alone knows.

Mujib got assassinated by the very people who brought him to power and Bhutto was hanged by the man whom he had selected over the heads of a number of more senior officers.

After my resignation at the end of the election December 1970, where my point was proved that their irresponsible behaviour would break Pakistan, I got involved in attempts to save what was left in the West, in some kind or form, for which we had claimed we wanted it. The Shaitan (Satan) has whispered in the ears of all of us that we are all 'Saviours', the wise don't take heed, the few fools do. I must have belonged to the last category when I undertook that marathon challenge — which landed me in solitary confinement in jails. But I learnt a lot there. Mind is an amazing factor — one can twist anything to one's liking — a great art and a blessing, in the struggle for survival, particularly in dictator-ridden countries.

This of course landed me in jail not once but twice, because Bhutto had different ideas about developing the New Pakistan. There is no space for all this in Pakistan politics here — my two last books, first 'Soldiering and Politics in India and Pakistan' and the second, 'Quest of Identity' (The Muslim Entanglement in India and Pakistan), are quite clear on the subject having been written by a soldier in his straight, and simple language.

But even during the period I never lost touch my old associations who were still alive. The Maharaja of Jaipur died on June 24, 1970 and his wife landed herself in jail soon after me (I would like to think in sympathy!) but it was actually for the same reasons as mine for having the courage of her convictions. The Shaitan had been leading her down the garden path too. This common factor has kept us friends for over half a century — not the Shaitan, but the convictions — and is one of the reasons for writing this book today.

Life's history teaches us that the struggle in life is the essence of life. The Paramount Power gave protection to the Princes because it suited them. The Princes had heaved a sigh of relief after the declaration of 1858 and accepted this protection, submission, which gave them continuity in the unstable conditions that had prevailed since the authority of the Moghuls was systematically destroyed by the degenerate progeny of Aurangzeb. That great Emperor must have done something solid in his reign of 50 years, in spite of what some historians might say, for his incompetent successors to take another 150 years to allow another power to walk into the Red Fort at Delhi and haul up their flag.

Before I unfold my story of reminiscences with the Princes I knew, I feel it necessary to go into the background of their coming into being and how they lived under the protection of the new Master and what influence and modes of relation and on their character and resources. But there was a distinct streak of consistency in certain aspects of their approach. I noticed they all had a complex about the white Bara Sahib who wore a white pith helmet with a golden spike and a gilded chain. The last two items symbolic of all colonial powers — the spike with sharp point-for-well... you know, where it could go if you misbehaved or needed prodding, and the chain's presence doesn't require elaboration.

A lot of books have been written about them, a lot of charges have been brought against them, but I have only written about things that were in my knowledge. I read every book that came out about them in the late 20s and 30s because I wanted to know all about 'them', as I also belong to 'their' class, by an accident of birth. Actually, I am very glad that I was born where I was, in that fortunate but small principality, where I could remain normal more easily and where it suited me to exploit my school tie of the fraternity and join the 'crowd', without much introduction and protocol and much to my surprise without a chip on my shoul-

der. How this happened? Why this happened? This is what the story is about. I have enjoyed writing it.

I find that whether it be writing or anything else, life is there to be enjoyed, to the fullest, if you can. And that life is simple but we do try our best to make it complicated — because I suppose there is some drama in it. The result of all this self-belief and act is that when we come across someone who is simple at heart and frank, we straightaway put up our guard, 'but he cannot be so straight', we say to ourselves. This is where life gets complicated. In this story you will notice that the writer is not only a privileged person, to have penetrated in the circle that he did, but also a lucky one. It is lucky the General who gets fame and the decorations; he may not be the ablest one. These are laws of life that we have to learn from. In the world of today, we are ruled by mediocrites, because there are more of this kind and therefore by the law of democratic society it is the one who can get more hands to rise for him, or stuff in more cards in the ballot boxes, by any means, that is declared the winner. Such things as merit, capability for the task, character, integrity and other such qualifications are secondary considerations. The important thing is to belong to a Biradari — a community — an ethnic group.

The aim of this story? If there is any — a motive — is to acknowledge my gratitude to those kind and generous Princes, my elders, who gave me the affection and the time that they did, who are here no more. And to pay a tribute to those one or two who are still around for carrying on the noble traditions of their Houses in the manner that they are doing, in the changed conditions, they have lost everything but not their dignity and self-respect.

I also write this for the children of my friends who are gone, my 'nephews' and 'grand-nephews', who have given me such respect and affection that it brings tears to my eyes. I have written this for them to learn from history and to show that they have a future just as glorious as the past, even more so, because now they have no chains and hindrances for their talents to bloom fully. They can now serve fully, to their hearts' content, their people, whom they ruled before.

The writing of this book has not been an easy task. I have tried to make it as complete as possible. As may be imagined a lot of research went into this story about the Princes of India whom I have given a link with the elite minority of India, the Muslims, because the treatment meted out to both has been very similar. The Princes were written off and Muslims are now being written off, systematically, as if according to a plan. Even the Congress Party that made so many promises doesn't seem to remember those after coming into power and having used their votes. Pandit Nehru was not only a politician but also a gentleman too and his approach to religion can be gauged by a glance at his will which he left behind. His daughter Mrs. Indira Gandhi had been doing her best but it is a task beyond the scope of one person. The concentration now is on how to capture the vote of the weaker society — the Harijans.

They may have joined the ocean of commoners today, they may have lost their titles, privileges, and privy purses and they may not be able to maintain and live in their palaces, as they did, but they are still that minority in the vast community of commoners who are not 'common'. Everything may have gone but the stock is there from which a base can be built — a base of leadership, of nobility and tradition of big thinking people in the political field above class, caste, colour and creed — which was the tradition of their forefathers. In this lies the future of the country and they are the only who can gather the scattered minority into a homogeneous fold, not only to assert their own right but to come out from a negative to a positive contribution in the society. Unless a big hearted and big thinking leadership is brought forward in the country, the main problem of the country — bick-

ering in the minorities and in the majority — will never stop and the dream of people like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will never be achieved — a healthy, positive, true secular welfare state in India.

This is not the history of Princes and Princesses, as these identities are mere accidents of birth. It is an attempt to show that these fortunate or unfortunate individuals were also human beings. They also had a heart and head that guided them. They also cried and laughed. They may not have felt the pangs of hunger but they did feel the pains of over-indulgence. They lived surrounded by servants and retainers, and yet they were lonely people. They had many admirers and worshippers but few friends. They had so many 'friends' that sometimes they got so disillusioned with all this that they ceased to make friends. Some were driven to desperation and took to various 'aids' to ease them in their plight of desperation. There was no shortage of such aid givers. Such props became a habit. And such aid became a necessity. And so the web of this vicious circle increased and increased till they got so entangled in it that instead of a web it became a fortress to them in which they lived in a world of their own.

It is not easy to write the history of a man or a woman or of any epoch. This is a difficult undertaking. One cannot tell lies and yet one cannot tell the whole truth either. So what is one to tell? And yet tell one must as some of them have been fascinating and interesting people. Some could have achieved greatness if the Paramount Power had allowed.

Some could have been worse if the same power had not saved them. They lived a privileged life. They lived a protected life; they lost the art of the fight for survival — which makes a person. But to pass away their time they learnt other acts and some became artists in the field of that art.

This attempt is especially difficult when not words but deeds are the milestones along the road of life. Their deeds were not on ordinary battlefields. They fought their battles in the confines of their fortresses of palaces, in dark corridors of such confines. They were battles of mind and heart. When the former split one heard no thunder or saw no flash. When the later broke one saw no blood and heard no sound.

For me, a soldier, it has been an interesting study — how the lack of struggle has made the individuals soft. How over-enthusiasm and bitterness has affected sound and objective approach. And then how the psycophants have succeeded in painting a picture, at times, when it did not exist. And then how some highly intelligent among them, when exposed to stark naked facts of life have blinked, in the glaring light of truth — how instead of facing the light they have either gone back into darkness or put on coloured glasses which showed them only what they wanted to see. To observe some of them in this state has been painful especially when sometimes they have refused a hand of help and guidance.

The Princes whom I knew are all gone — are past. But the children of some of them are very much there, in spite of all that they may have gone through. They may have lost their privy purses, their titles, their gun salutes, etc. as a result of the amendment of 1972 in the Indian Constitution (and similar broken promises in Pakistan), but they are still 'Princes' and will remain, I am sure and pray, till the trumpet sounds. Because the name or the expression Prince has many meanings, but the one I like most is the touch of nobility in it. Why these children still touch my knees with folded hands, behave towards me the way they do, and address me as uncle and 'Kakaji', proves my point of nobility and respect for elders. It brings moisture to my eyes, which the steam in the heart produces, when that muscle of emotion and life gets warm with love and gratitude. They are truly noble.

You are truly noble
The way you bend to greet,
Like the mighty sky
That also bends to greet. (S. A.)

It is this feeling that makes me write this book about those whom I have heard being called 'Rubbish' and 'Good Riddance' by those whose moral and constitutional duty it was to be just to them. Nothing makes a heart burn more than injustice. That has been the thrust and the motivating force of this Saga.

PART I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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A glance at the political map of old India shows that hundreds of states, big and small, are to be found scattered all over the country with no natural or national boundaries to demarcate them from the rest of it. The question that naturally arises is: Why were these numerous principalities allowed to survive the tide of British conquest when every inch of their territories could have been annexed. The answer cannot be easily given, for, in trying to sit in judgement upon the motives and actions lay at a time and in circumstances which have no relation to the conditions of today. After all, empires are not won according to preconceived plans, nor has altruism any place in the scheme of conquest. So, no dogmatic assertion in favour of a particular view on the motives which led to the preservation of the States can be accepted as conclusive. Nevertheless, two sets of mutually differing views exist on the subject. One school, led by the defenders of British

policy, argued that the States afford a supreme example of British good faith, while another school, drawn mostly from Indian nationalists, affirmed that they had been preserved solely to thwart Indian nationalism. In his book "Protected Princes of India" Sir William Lee Warner maintains that the preservation of the States "affords a single instance of good faith". He, however, adds that it also represents an act of "political sagacity". The wisdom of not making a clean sweep of the States was realized for the first time when the Sepoy Mutiny threatened the very foundations of British rule and would probably have overwhelmed it had not a number of Princes come forward in support of it. And had there not been so many personal motives taking advantage of the revolt of the Bengal Army Sepoys against their neglecting officers and of the fact that by and large the two other armies of the Company, the Madras and the Bombay armies remained loyal. So, good faith was not the only determining factor in influencing British policy towards the States. The fact that a number of them were annexed by a succession of Governor Generals till 1857 is conclusive evidence against the plea of good faith as the only motive.

Similarly, the contention of the other school does not comprehend the whole truth. The argument that the States were preserved as allies of British rule lacks historical perspective, for their usefulness was not discovered until the outbreak of the Mutiny. So strictly speaking, neither of the two sides represent the whole truth, which perhaps lies in a combination of such diverse motives and circumstances as political expediency, historical accident and good faith. But whatever the motive, there is little historical evidence to support the contention of the Princes about their pre-existing sovereignty, the 'sanctity' of their treaties, and their rights of absolute internal independence.

Indian history of the eighteenth century shows that circumstances favoured the growth of British rule in this country. India had become a veritable museum of internal decay and disorder and it lay at the feet of any foreign invader who could combine in itself the qualities of tact, energy and foresight. The rule of the Moghuls, after Aurangzeb, combined with a rapid decline in the moral and physical qualities of the successors of Babar, hastened the decay and the eventual downfall of the Empire. Professor Rushbork Williams does not exaggerate when he writes about the Moghul rulers in these words:

> "They have abandoned their jerkins and their boots; they are now clad in beautiful muslins, and on their feet are jewelled slippers. Gone is the great sword; in its place is only a dainty, slender blade. If we pass on another generation or two, what do we find? Pale persons in petticoats elegantly smelling a rose!"

We have the testimony of no less a person than Sir Thomas Roe, England's ambassador at the court of Jahangir, who described the weakness of the Great Moghuls in these often-quoted words:

> "His greatness substantially is not in itself, but in the weakness of his neighbours, whom like an overgrown pike he feeds on as prey. Pride, pleasure, and riches are their best description. Honesty and truth, discipline, civility, they have none, or very.... little"

It was not Roe alone who saw that behind the impressive facade of might and majesty, the Empire was nursing a fatal weakness, inseparable from autocratic rule. Bernier, a French physician at the court of Aurangzeb, a Colonel James in his letter to the Austrian Emperor in 1746, Dow in his History of India, written in 1770, and Clive in his despatch of 1765, all held the view that India could easily be conquered. Despite the feebleness of the Moghul Empire, it may be doubted whether the merchant adventurers from the West would have ventured to project their vision beyond their wares and dividends, if the country had been subjected

to a single government, whether of the Moghuls or the Marhattas. The lesson which the English Company learnt in 1687 by rashly trying conclusions with Aurangzeb, thereby involving the settlements in jeopardy, was too valuable for it or its European rivals to ignore with safety. But the situation underwent a thorough change in their favour with the disappearance of all vestiges of imperial authority and with the setting in of chaotic conditions soon after his death.

Situated at the extreme outposts of the Empire, the European settlements at no time enjoyed complete immunity from the turbulence of their neighbours, and the necessity of depending upon their own resources in defence of their interest gave them a deep insight into the condition and character of Indian Powers. A number of these Powers were mere upstarts with no roots in the affection of their peoples or in the strength of their armies. They were mere fragments thrown up by an overwhelming political convulsion. They, therefore, lacked the essential qualities of a duly constituted state. The great Muslim succession states like Bengal, Oudh and Hyderabad were great only in name. They lost all vigour soon after the death of the rulers of these states that the British were able to acquire such an easy dominion over this country. The Rajput states, besides their inability to reconcile their internal feuds, had lost their former vitality. The Marhattas alone were powerful enough but even they lacked the breadth of vision and solidity of judgement and real solidarity amongst themselves which distinguished the men who guided the fortunes of the European Companies in India. They produced able generals and administrators, but by permitting the break-up of their political organization into a loose confederacy, they lost the advantages of unity of purpose and of concerted action. The great Marhatta captains who broke away from the central authority at Poona became far more intent upon furthering their own interests. They owed no or nominal allegiance to the Peshwa except as convenience dictated to them. The unbridgeable gulf which Scindia and Holkar, for example, had dug between one another was one of the decisive factors in the ultimate dissolution of the Marhatta rule.

If this was the condition of important rulers, any one of them could have stepped into the shoes of the Moghuls, if he had shown greater wisdom and ability, very little need be said about the lesser Princes. They lived in a world of their own, far removed from the realities of the situation around them. The armies of this period truly reflected the degeneration of the times. Barring the disciplined armies of the Marhattas, of the Muslim rulers of Mysore and of the Sikhs at a later period, the Indian soldiery was a mere rabble with no stomach for serious fighting.

This, in brief, was the state of India in the eighteenth century. Pitted against such a miscellany of weak Indian Powers were foreign Companies, controlled by ambitious and far-sighted men. Resolute and sagacious as they were, they combined with these qualities a high sense of duty to their country — a trait conspicuous by its absence in the Indian Princes. Experts in the strategy of war as well as of diplomacy, they scored an easy advantage over their Indian rivals. There were no such men on the other side.

Clive's letter to Pitt, for example, urging him to take over the administration of the Company's possessions in India was a supreme example of his ambition and statesmanship. It seems to me, therefore, that although good fortune guided almost every step of the English towards their rise to power in this country, the theory that they stumbled blindfold upon an immense empire is not sound if we bear in mind the deplorable condition of India in those days. There is much truth in the observation of Sir Alfred Lyall when he says that the acquisition of the country by the English became a matter of course after the defeat of the French, their most powerful rivals.

The series of victories which the English won in the South and in the battles of Plassey and Buxar in Bengal and Oudh convinced them that sooner or later the mantle of the Moghuls would fall upon them, but this certainty did not induce in them the impetuosity of a stampeding pony. When the whole of Oudh lay at his feet, Clive wisely refused, notwithstanding the clamour to the contrary, to incorporate it into the Company's possessions. He restored it to the Nawab Vazier and concluded with him the barrier-treaty of August 1765. The object of this treaty was to use Oudh as a buffer state, a kind of political Maginot Line, so that behind this protective armour Bengal, the Company's prize possession, might live in peace and security, nursing the power of the English undistracted by outside attacks. Such an arrangement presupposed the necessity of ensuring the absolute subordination of the Nawab Vazier, for the whole fabric of British diplomacy depended upon his unwavering loyalty to them. This was easily accomplished by keeping a vigilant eye upon him and by depriving him of his rights of foreign intercourse. Treaties guaranteeing his internal sovereignty were no bar to the imposition of British interference even in his domestic affairs.

The remark of Professor A. B. Keith and Warren Hastings 'enunciated in the most absolute terms the worthlessness of treaties of any kind as a protection to those who were in relations with the Company', has greater application to Oudh than to any other state.

The spirit of caution, as exemplified by the political transaction with Oudh, claimed the magnitude of a definite policy. The key-note of this policy was to enclose British interests within a ring-fence and to severely limit their liabilities to the absolute necessities of the case. Lord Cornwallis was a firm believer in the soundness of this policy. He had a horror for new entanglements. He believed that by circumscribing the Company's activities to a clearly demarcated ring-fence, opportunities would be afforded to stronger organizations in the country to absorb their weaker neighbours and become settled states, living in peace and amity with the English dominions. Lord Wellesley had, however, no faith in such political prescriptions. The internal decay of the country was not conducive to the growth of such a policy. Wellesley, therefore, concluded that a bold assertion of British superiority was the only solvent of India's political problems. It became the ruling passion of his life to elevate the Company from the position of "primus inter pares" to one of unchallenged supremacy. Armed with the powerful support of the Tory ministry at home, he could confidently ignore the counsel of moderation enjoined upon him by the Court of Directors and Acts of Parliament. With his heart set upon conquest he was in no frame of mind to listen to such sentiments as:

> "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of domination in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation."

In fact, he treated the Directors as a pack of narrow-minded old women. It is not necessary to go into the details of his great military victories beyond referring to the fact that the successful elimination of Tippu and the breaking of the backbone of the Marhatta power ensured the supremacy of the British beyond a shadow of doubt.

Great were the military victories of Wellesley, greater still were his achievements in the field of diplomacy. His subsidiary system was the bedrock upon which he and his successors built up British dominion in India. The chief object of this system was to strike down the armed strength of the Indian Powers and to render them completely helpless so that they might never again challenge the supremacy of the British. It was his anxiety to prevent the States from offering a foothold and becoming useful bases for foreign intrigues. To gain this end, he forced them to



H. M. Queen Victoria



In her youth-an early Portrait of Queen Victoria



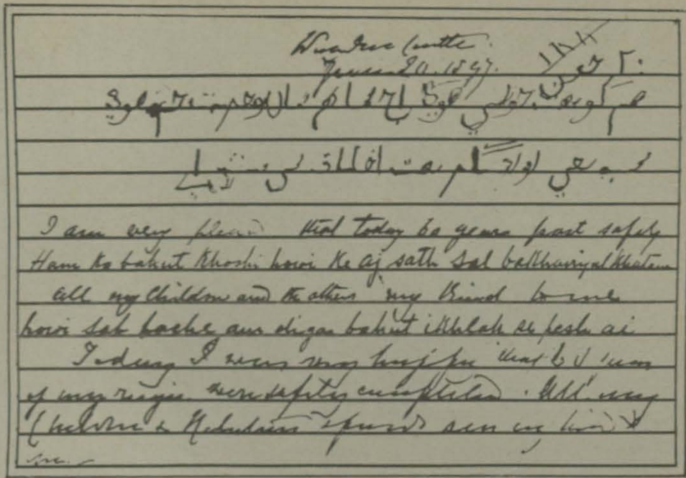
Some of her Princely Children - their Highnesses of (left to right) Kalsia, Loharu, Maler-Kotla, Mandi, Nawanagar, Kashmir, Kapurthala (on the occasion of the golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Maharaja Jagjit Singh of Kapurthala), Alwar, Patiala, Bikanir, Bharatpur, Palanpur.



Queen Victoria with her Munshi (Teacher) Abdul Karim, with whom she formed a benevolent and intense relationship, inspite of disapproval from her Ministers. She promoted him to her 'Indian Secretary' with a note that at her funeral he was to be given a place of honour



Queen Victoria - Empress of India (1877) with her two Muslim Khidmatgars (attendants)



Windsor Castle.
June 20. 1897.

I am very pleased that today 60 years past safely
Ham ko bahut khoshi hovi ke aj sath sal [illegible]
all my children and the others very kind to me
hovi sab bache aur digar bahut [illegible]
Today I was very happy that 60 years
of my reign were safely completed. All my
children & relations [illegible]

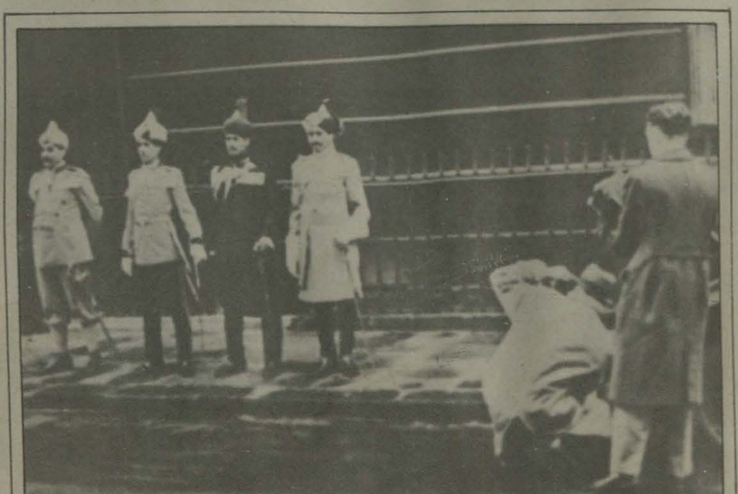
Queen Victoria wrote these lines in Urdu (right to left) and in Roman Urdu in English Form (left to right) saying 'we are very pleased that today 60 years have passed.'



In this photograph taken at Osborne House England in August 1887, can be seen with her two Indian servants. Queen Victoria mentions in her letters who-'kissed her feet on arrival' - Mohammad Buksh (left) and Abdul Karim (right). Both Muslims.



Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee drive from the palace to St. Paul's Cathedral and back, passing the Houses of Parliament, escorted by her Indian officers sovereigns 'Escort' on 22 June, 1897.



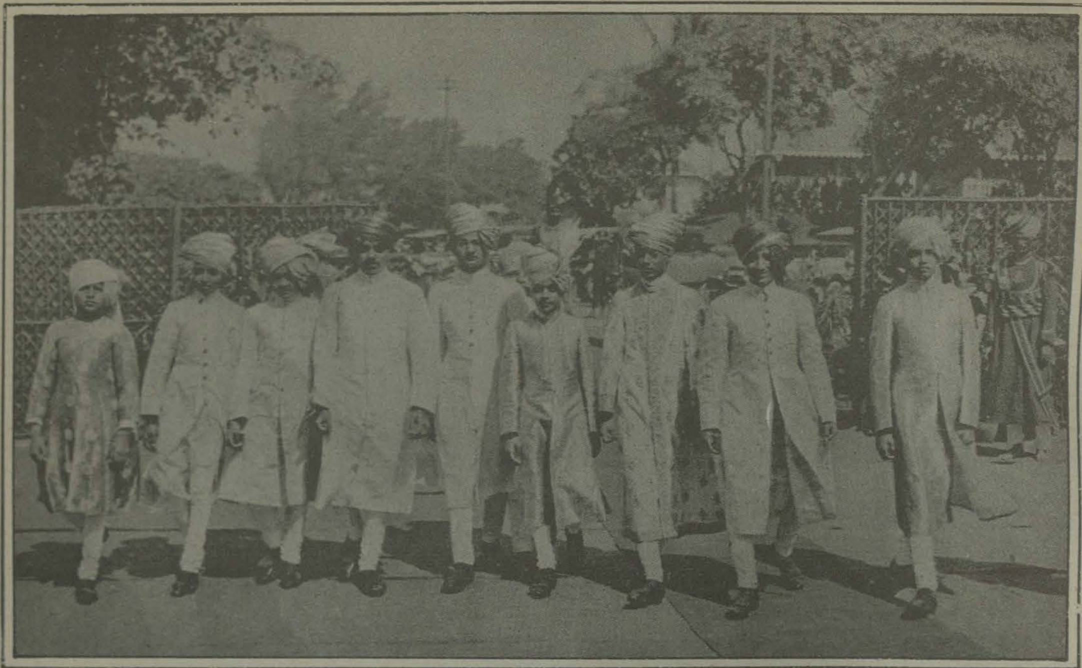
The Indian Orderly Officers of King George VI. On extreme right is my old squadron Risaldar Maj. Ahmad Khan Sardar Bahadar of 7th Light Cavalry - London 1943.



H. R. H the Prince of Wales (Later Edward the 8th leading the elephant procession on a magnifcient elephant to the Durbar Hall at Baroda.



Queens favourite grandson the famous Prince of Wales who later became King Edward the 8th and abdicated because of his love affair.



Heirs apparent of ruling princes on their way to pay homage to the Prince at government house, Bombay.



Prince of Wales with the Maharaja of Kolhapur, and the Governor of Bombay, Poona.

surrender their rights of foreign intercourse. To ensure their faithful observance of this prohibition, he compelled them to accept British Residents at their courts and British troops within their territories. Such a procedure deprived the Princes of their independence and led them to depend more and more upon British arms to sustain them on their gadis (thrones). It is true that in theory they were allowed full freedom in the management of their internal affairs, but the presence of the agent of a powerful Government in their midst rendered even this independence illusory. The examples of Oudh and Hyderabad showed how interference even in the domestic matters of the States became a corollary to their dependent position. It will be seen that with the subordination and loyalty of the Princes, it bred great evils. The Princes, at no time conscious of their obligations to their own people, very soon sank into great depths of degradation under the system. The effect of their power over their subjects, without its counterpart in duties, was soon felt in the scandalous mismanagement of their administrations. Far-seeing men, some of the contemporaries of Wellesley, realized the great defects of the subsidiary system. No less a person than his own brother, Arthur Wellesley, (later the Duke of Wellington) wrote about the subject in these terms:

> "By this system the authority of the native governments is paralyzed, and they have invariably to resort to the assistance of the British Government for the management of their own internal concerns. In fact, it naturally amounted to setting up impotent rulers, who could be of no help in case of war but may be a considerable source of trouble if the defence of the Empire's frontier is dependent on them."

But such warnings had no effect upon Wellesley who was far too intent upon enhancing the might of British Power to allow his mind to be troubled by the rights and wrongs of his policy.

The forward policy of Wellesley committed the British to a position from which there could be no possible withdrawal. Cornwallis, during his brief second term of office, and his successors tried in vain to ease the horse which Wellesley had ridden for full seven years with such relentless fury. Lord Hastings took a more realistic attitude on the Indian problem and came to the conclusion, after a survey, of the political situation in the country, that the only successful way in which the Indian nettle could be grasped was to continue the policy of Wellesley. He therefore, made a definite departure from the policy of limited liability which had remained the goal of the English from 1757 to 1813. He realized that the true position of the states was one of isolation and subordinate cooperation with the British Government. The subsidiary alliances negotiated by Wellesley had left many loopholes, particularly in the matter of allowing a free hand to the bigger Princes over their feudatories. And as these Princes were thoroughly incapable of shouldering their responsibilities, their authority over their subordinates had degenerated into the worst form of oppression. Hastings relieved them of this responsibility and transferred the subordinate states to British protection. In June 1817 the Peshwa was compelled to forswear his overlordship over the Marhatta Princes and to dissolve the Marhatta Confederacy 'in form and substance'. By force of arms a similar stipulation was imposed upon Scindia and Holkar who were compelled to renounce their pretensions in Rajputana and Central India. The Rajput States were thus rescued from domination of the Marhattas, and Central India which had long been a 'no-man's land', with its political landmarks completely obliterated, was resettled by the creation of 145 principalities with varying degrees of jurisdictional powers. Amir Khan, the Pindhari leader, was taught the advantage of good behaviour by conferring on him the principality of Tonk. Tonk is a classic example of the emptiness of the claims of the Princes about their so-called pre-existing

sovereignty and the 'sanctity' of their treaties. Amir Khan's brother-in-law was similarly raised to Nawabship by presenting him with Jaora. The eleven-year old Holkar was compelled to bear the burden of this generosity to the two Nawabs by providing territories for them from his own state.

Bhopal owes its existence to the existence of this no-man's land and of course to the British, who wedged in this Muslim principality between the Scindia and Holkar and elevating it to a precedence quite out of proportion to its size.

This transaction was justified as an effort of political foresight, and was intended as counterpoise against the predominant Hindu influence in Malwa. The political settlement of Kathiawar was also taken up and by a treaty dated 3 April 1820 the Gaekwar engaged not to send his Mulkgiri army to that province on condition of receiving fixed tributes from the Kathiawar chiefs.

This, in merest outline, was the political settlement of Hastings, and he took serious notice of any departure from it. The Peshwa lost his state by wavering in his loyalty to the British connection. In his private diary dated 8 June 1817, Hastings records that the extreme of deposing Bahirao was repugnant to his feelings, but when the necessity arose, he sanctioned the annexation of Poona and on the ground that: 'Irrefutable evidence has shown that the implicit obedience recognized as due to the mandates of such a head of the Marhatta empire, will operate in violation of every solemnity of pledge to us... There must then be no Peshwa.'

Satara was raised on the ashes of Poona to placate Marhatta sentiment, although the newly created principality did not survive Dalhousie's annexationist policy.

By his far-reaching military exploits which completely destroyed the Marhatta power, the only rival of the British, and by his equally impressive political settlements, Hastings demonstrated to the Indian Princes where real power lay in this country. He concluded the largest number of treaties, created a multitude of new states and raised the puppet ruler of Oudh to kingship with a view of spiting the ghost of an emperor who still clung to the remnants of his forgotten glory. But the prime-mover of everyone of his political transactions was to completely subordinate the states of British power and British interests. This motive is fully revealed in his treaties. They proclaimed British supremacy and a corresponding subordination of the Princes. Whatever attributes of external sovereignty they still possessed were finally extinguished. Their intercourse with one another was interdicted and they were required to submit their disputes to the arbitration and decision of the Paramount Power. Their armies were severally curtailed and stipulation taken from them that the resources of their states would be placed at the disposal of the Government whenever called upon to do so. To ensure that no infringement of these conditions was contemplated. British residents were posted to the Courts of important states and were actively assisted by subsidiary troops. Further, the Princes were enjoined to defer to the advice of the residents in the administration of their states. The treaty with Udaipur, the premier Rajputana State, that concluded on 13 January 1818, is typical of those negotiated by Hastings. Article 3 of this treaty clearly sets out that:

> "The Maharana of Oodypore will always act insubordinate cooperation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy and will not have any consultation with other chiefs or States."

An arrangement which so thoroughly accomplished the helplessness of the Princes was, from the British point of view, perfectly ideal. Several Political Officers deemed it a part of their duty to interfere with the State's administration to the minutest detail and if the latter protested, endless difficulties were created for them. They were certainly untrammelled by the treaty stipulations guaranteeing

independence in the internal affairs of the states and resistance against intervention was smothered by the incompetence of the rulers. Indeed, less of independence was what the Princes had bargained for by accepting British protection. It was an unnatural protection inasmuch as they were rendered independent of their own people, the only competent party to wield the weapon of correction against their intractable rulers. It is small wonder, therefore, that from misrule by some of the Princes, on one hand, and unregulated intervention by the Paramount Power on the other, became a normal feature of relations between the two parties.

A survey of this relationship from the beginning of British rule down to the present day indicates that intervention has been a constant factor throughout the course of history. Till the date of its dissolution in 1856 Oudh was subject to close surveillance and it literally bought the postponement of its doom by paying heavy indemnity in territories and in money. The overbearing attitude of Major Baillie, for example, was more than the Nawab Vazier had bargained for. From the earliest times, Hyderabad, the premier State, suffered from similar encroachments. His treaties offered but a poor protection to the Nizam against assaults upon his internal sovereignty. Indeed, so thorough-going was Sir Henry Russell's interference that the Nizam was driven to despair, leading to his sullen withdrawal from his own government. This was the tale of woe which one heard in almost every state. Such a system did not, and could not, conduce to the growth of a healthy policy.

By assuming paramountcy over the state the British Government incurred the responsibility of ensuring that at least a semblance of ordered government was maintained in them. Moreover, it was not in its own interest that misrule in the states should flare up into a conflagration leaping across to British Indian borders. It, therefore, stepped in whenever it feared the development of such a situation. But such intervention resulted in the annexation of the state itself. The idea that the malady of misrule could be cured by subjecting the affected state to long or short course of treatment by way of direct rule and by relieving the offending ruler of his responsibilities for a time, was a later discovery. But in the pre-Mutiny days annexation was considered a short-cut to end irresponsible rule. As the late Mr. Ramsay MacDonald expressively put in his book 'The Government of India', 'the Wellesley policy of protection was the mother of the Dalhousie policy of annexation.'

Dalhousie accounted for 150,000 square miles of state territories and barring Oudh, this colonial acquisition was made in the name of the doctrine of lapse and in furtherance of imperial interests. It is, of course, true that Dalhousie abominated Wellesley's subsidiary system which perpetuated a medley of subordinate principalities, governed by spineless Princes and half-controlled by English Residents. It is also true that he believed that the existence of numerous 'petty intervening principalities' militated against the growth of an all-India policy. As Ramsay Muir writes, Dalhousie would have liked to make a clean sweep of 'all the dependent states and bring the whole of India under a single, just, efficient and systematic rule.'

But such a project was too ambitious. It is, however, evident that Dalhousie showed no consistency in his prescriptions of misrule in big states. If he was anxious to save the British Government from incurring the moral obloquy of perpetuating the bad rule of the Nawab Vazier, it became equally incumbent upon him to take a similar course of action in respect of other states, e.g. Bahawalpur and Hyderabad, where internal conditions were nearly as bad as in Oudh. But like a wise Galileo, he even forbade intervention in their affairs on the ground that their domestic matters were outside the jurisdiction of the British Government.

The fact is that the policy of annexation was as capricious as that of intervention. It was certainly not employed to emancipate the 'suffering millions'.

Halting and unregulated as Dalhousie's annexationist policy was, it nevertheless succeeded in arousing the fears of the Princes who felt that sooner or later the tide of British conquest would engulf them all. They hardly realized the distinction which he made between substantive and subordinate states. The Satara and Oudh annexations were perhaps the most unpopular, and Indian opinion began to wonder whether 'the foreigner looked on sovereignty as a tree whose fruits must ultimately fall to his basket'.

Whether Dalhousie's policy paved the way for the revolt of 1857 it is not easy to say, but when the storm burst, a number of Princes offered their unstinted support to the British Government. Possibly, the defection of the Nizam would have weighted the scale in favour of the insurgents, but he remained steadfast in his loyalty to the British connection. What a decisive part his attitude played in those critical times is best illustrated in these words:

> "If the Nizam goes, all goes."

Of course, he did not 'go' and, as Adir Sidney Low so gratefully acknowledges, 'the British Raj was saved'

The British Government took full advantage of the lessons taught by the Mutiny. It realized that the Princes were not such wicked men as to plan its destruction. On the contrary, they were willing and loyal "allies" whose support could be counted upon in times of stress and necessity. It was, therefore, to its own interest that they should be cherished and conciliated. Their "comradeship in difficulty and danger" was conclusively proved during the fiery ordeal. Thenceforward "once a Native State always a Native State" became an axiom as well as an article of faith! Lord Canning upon whom revolved the responsibility of pacifying the post-Mutiny India, hastened to assure the Princes that the British Government no longer coveted their territories. He accordingly granted adoption Sanads to a number of them, conveying the assurance that the doctrine of lapse had been finally abandoned. The Princes welcomed these Sanads as god-sents, although this boon completely destroyed their pretensions to independent status. How great was the relief felt by the Princes by the reversal of Dalhousie's policy is exemplified by the following observation of the ruler of Gwalior:

> "Now that annexation is at end,' he said, 'we breathe freely, even when our failings are proved and our shortcomings discussed."

But the post-Mutiny changes brought no improvement in the status of the Princes. On the contrary, the bonds of their dependence were further tightened. Intervention for the prevention of flagrant misrule was not asserted as a matter of right. Nor was annexation completely foresworn. It was still to remain in the armour of the Paramount Power to be used not as a punishment for misrule, but against the worse crime of 'disloyalty or flagrant breach of engagement'. Thus, the subjection of the Princes to imperial rule was accomplished in a methodical and thorough-going manner, extinguishing once and for all whatever 'shadowy remnants of an obsolete sovereignty' they still possessed.

The effects of the system were soon felt in a number of states. Annexation, however, imperfectly applied was like the sword of Damocles and inspired wholesome fear in the minds of the less desperate amongst the Princes. Its substitution by the mild corrective of intervention put a premium upon misrule. Mulhar Rao Gaekwar felt no restraint in plunging his state into any depths of disorder and his deposition in 1875 was considered a sufficient punishment for the enormity of his crimes. In 1891 Manipur deserved confiscation for the political crimes of its heir-apparent. Although the Yuvraj was hanged, the state escaped his fate! But annex-

ation was now looked upon as a bad dream, and punishment of the offending Prince, without touching the integrity of his state was considered an adequate remedy. Evidently, the whole policy hinged upon conciliating the Princes so as to ensure their loyal support to the Government in times of stress and necessity.

This partnership grew as new factors arose to challenge British dominion in India. Since 1885 Indian nationalism in the shape of Congress was steadily gaining strength and momentum, causing profound alarm to far-seeing Anglo-Indian officials. They felt that sooner or later the tide of nationalism would attain a proportion when its suppression would become almost impossible. They, therefore, advocated the prevention of its growth by timely action. This action consisted in bringing together all the conservative forces in the country as a counterpoise to the growing sentiment. Among the early officials to foresee the coming events was Lord Lytton who advocated, several years before the founding of the Congress, the institution of a Council of Princes for the purposes of combating Indian nationalism. But nothing came out of his suggestion, which was cold-shouldered in England.

Lord Curzon gave a new interpretation to the alliance with the Princes. Himself a man of great vigour, both of body and mind, he abhorred their slothful habits and their light-hearted attitude towards their responsibilities as rulers. Efficiency was his passion and he never ceased to rouse them from their time-honoured lethargy. He viewed with strong disapproval and interdicted the practice prevalent among them of leaving their states, under the slightest pretext, and spending large sums of money over sojourns in distant lands. He was a hard taskmaster and disliked make-belief. He never deluded the Princes by treating their 'sham' royalty as genuine. Their position in relation to the Government, he declared, was one of distinct subordination and he treated them accordingly. Empty constitutional proprieties never influenced his attitude towards them. They owed their existence to the self-restraint of the Paramount Power and not to any antiquated or non-existent source. With a sledge-hammer argument he brought this point home to the minds of the Princes in a speech at Bahawalpur on 12 November, 1903.

He said: 'The sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged'. It has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogative.

It was in the best interest of the Princes themselves to realize this fact and willingly 'share the responsibilities as well as the glories of British rule'.

In other words, they were required to become willing and efficient instruments of British power in India. These dictatorial methods naturally produced a serious flutter in the Princely dovecotes, and the Princes clamoured for a reversal of Curzon's policy. It was, of course, impossible to repudiate his assumptions as regards their dependent position, but his successors felt that there was no real need to emphasize this fact. The policy of minute interference and surveillance for conciliating the Princes. He called upon the residents not to resort to vexatious interference with the states, but to guide their policy with the knowledge that:

> "The foundation stone of the whole system is the recognition of identity of interests between the Imperial Government and the Darbars.'

Minto's solicitude for the Princes was not altogether unselfish. The national movement, though still strictly confined to constitutional methods, was already giving evidence of its rapidly growing strength. Minto decided to fight it. His methods were simple. By granting separate electorates to the Muslims, he introduced communalism in the political life of the country. Secondly, by allowing a greater latitude to the Princes he ensured their support against Indian national-

ism. The following passage, taken from an important source explains the reasons for Minto's generosity to the Princes:

> "At almost the same moment the attitude of the Government of India began to change. The explanation lies less in any belated recognition of the Princes' rights than in the fact that the political movements within British India itself were beginning to dispute the right and authority by which India was governed. Assailed by the intelligentsia the Government looked round naturally for allies to resist the tide of the Mutiny. In 1907 the Separate Electorate and the Princes might have aided to slacken the onslaught of political unrest by dividing the two communities — the Muslims and the Hindus on the political platform. They were, therefore, to be cultivated rather than coerced. Seeing their rising value, the Princes raised the demands, but not too much, for they also were threatened by the same forces that the Government of India was seeking to dam back into constitutional channels. A new tendency had come into operation."

But this tendency of ranging the non-progressive elements in the country on the side of the Government for preventing the growth of the national movement did not bring any improvement in the position of the Princes. Their subordination to the Paramount Power had remained essentially the same. In fact, dependence was the basis and meaning of the states policy. This policy had not changed, although the entire face of the world had. The sacrifices of the Princes on behalf of their protectors and their numerous methods of winning the favour of the Government had not made the joke of paramountcy any the less galling to them. Time had certainly modified old conditions, but small concessions did not affect the basic position of the Princes. Of what consequence was it if the Crown Representative sits or steps forward when receiving a Prince; if an heir to the 'gadi' assumes power without awaiting formal confirmation by the Government; or if the Political Agents have become less meddlesome? The Chamber of Princes, the establishment of which in 1921 was greeted with an exuberance of joy, had not brought a new heaven on earth to the Princes. The status assigned to them in Lord Reading's letters to the Nizam in 1926 and the devastating assertion of the Butler Committee, 'that the paramountcy of the British Government must always remain paramount', had not changed so long as the present system in practice prevailed. Indeed, the Princes could not wriggle, themselves out of a position which had been specially designed for them.

This is how the State's policy had grown since the rise of the British to power. It is not possible in a rapid survey like this to deal with every aspect of growth, but it is worthwhile to set down certain facts as they emerge from a historical retrospect. First, there is no historical evidence for the claim of the Princes that they possessed what is called a "pre-existing sovereignty". Apart from the fact that a majority of the states were either foundatories of the Moghuls, the Marhattas or the Sikhs, a multitude of new ones were created by the British. It is equally clear that almost every one of them suffered from internal decay and collapsed into helpless submission at the very first impact of an energetic power like the English. Secondly, the plea that their treaties are sacrosanct is not valid. These treaties were ignored soon after they were concluded. The unilateral action of the British Government in putting a 'constructive interpretation' upon them so as to suit its own convenience, had completely destroyed their original significance. Moreover, only forty states can claim the dubious distinction of having "negotiated" treaties with the Government. The rest have engagements of a type ranging from Sanads to Fael Zamins and Ikrarnamas, the last two belonging to the category of undertak-

ings for good behaviour and implicit obedience to the Paramount Power. Incidentally there were some states which have no formal engagements whatsoever, e.g. Pudukottai. Thirdly although the various treaties and engagements guarantee the internal sovereignty of the Princes, such an assurance had been observed more by its breach. In fact, interference had been a constant factor in the growth of the relations between the two parties, it had, according to the confession of the Princes themselves, reduced their sovereignty to a shadow. Lastly, the States system particularly since the post-Mutiny period had been designed to use the Princes as 'loyal instruments' of imperial power. They had tried again and again to secure a modification of British paramountcy, but with no success.

It is now clear that their deliverance consisted in becoming constitutional rulers and by consolidating their position, by gathering in unity, big or small, under the protective dome of the Chamber of Princes, next to the House of Parliament, in the Capital, in New Delhi. And not being content by just flying their big or small flags and firing their gun salutes from 21 bangs to the lowest 9 bangs. (Why these odd numbers? I have never been able to find out. The Ruler coming of age at 21? Or the early age of marriage of a Princess at 9?)

Surely they could not have been blind to the changes that were happening around them. How could they feel secure, or even pretend to be secure of their special status, which was guaranteed to them by their treaties with the Paramount Power, when they should have known through history the fate of treaties — so easy to tear up when it suited the power to do so. And when Paramountcy itself was not defined and eternal.

This complacency and heads in sand (Palaces) attitude, made it possible for the Paramount Power to ignore them, in its endeavour to pacify the Powers in the land that it was negotiating its withdrawal with — to once again become the humble Trading Company, from the City of London, asking for special privileges in trade. The circle had been completed, the Paramount Power was packing up in a hurry, in such a hurry that it left the subcontinent in a state of chaos similar to the one it took over couple of centuries back.

Even when assessing the background of the origin of the Indian Princes, and the break up of the conditions that gave birth to them, poor Aurangzeb is again on the cross. Every Hindu and British writer has condemned him, except for one or two exceptions. They quote Professor Rushbrook Williams when he writes about the Moghul rulers, quoted earlier.

This cannot be the description of Aurangzeb at any time. He never wore any jewels. He was always simply clad. At one stage he was so fed up with the effeminate habit of his father and grandfather's court that he became a hermit and only came back with sword in his hand when he saw the Empire being destroyed by the intrigues of his father who after the death of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal on whose grave stands the Taj, had given up interest in the affairs of the state and taken to pleasures of the court and lived in a world of fantasy. He had divided the Empire into four viceroyalties and at the head of each one had placed a son and hoped to control them by intrigue.

Aurangzeb was the third son, the ablest and a puritan, from early youth; he never had any time for the court pleasures. He was the only one who was used for battles. It was his father Shahjahan who started the conquest of Deccan on orders of his father Jahangir. It was again Shahjahan who destroyed more temples than anyone else, who as Emperor, had to cope with the reaction of his and grandfather's policies on the question of religion. It was Akbar's Deen-e-Ilahi which started the rot of Hindu-Muslim controversy, which was unfortunately not nipped in the bud by the man who succeeded him, his eldest son the indulgent Jahangir.

The same Jahangir who revolted against Akbar — the first serious revolt in the chain of them. It is he who had his son blinded for revolting against him and it was death by drink that removed his two brothers from the scene, so that he was spared the fight for succession and Akbar on his dying bed had to give him the sword of state when he knew that his son at the time was half drunk with an opium drink.

To go a bit further in history, Sher Shah Suri was only able to oust Humayun because he indulged so much in opium bouts that he never took full advantage of his success in battles, no sooner had he cleared the field — for months celebrated the victory. Babar was very fond of Humayun and gave his own life to save him but knew his son's weakness. I am not saying that he was not brave enough to scale the battlements ahead to troops and was an able commander. Also, I am aware that his brothers were revolting against him and most of his time was wasted in suppressing them — his father having willed that he be kind to them. All I am trying to stress here is that the habit of indulgence encouraged his brothers.

At a meal, after a battle, when Babar saw Sher Shah Suri, then a young Afghan in service, (then mere Farid Khan) eating his roasted lamb with his dagger, he nudged Humayun and said, 'Be careful of that man, he watched you like a hawk and is as sober as cold, hard, sharp steel blade'.

Babar and Aurangzeb are the only two I know, whom I would call really great soldiers among them all. I have often wondered how the House of Taimur lasted 310 years when its maximum life should have been 110 years. They were both soldiers and statesmen and practising devout Muslims. They were both kind and simple, so simple that they looked complicated. Aurangzeb was too kind-hearted and forgiving which Khafi Khan the historian records was not good for the administration.

It should be remembered that the Muslims as early as the 12th century, when the Turkish kings of Delhi decided to stay in the land of conquest, had tried their best to 'interact' with the people of the land — Hindus. But there was a wall of Brahmanism that stood between them and the 'others'. Those who adopted the faith of the rulers were considered worst than the lowest of the low. The Rajput House of Sisodhis of Chitor prided itself for not having given their daughters to the Muslim Moghul Princes — was it on the basis of chivalry or caste or religion, or that they were not wanted ? They claimed their origin of line from Rama. They should have been more tolerant for the good of their people. So this game of Hindu-Muslim bigotry started much earlier than Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb, brothers — whose father Shahjahan was three-quarter Hindu.

Shahjahan took the severest action against the Hindus because of the pressure at the court of the Muslim nobles — who had started their opposition even before Akbar died. Jahangir in the last years of his reign was always in such a stupor that he couldn't care who was who, and was later completely controlled by his wife, Nur Jahan, who was busy spreading Shi'aism and finding ways and means of creating a kingdom for her son-in-law Shaharyar, Jahangir's youngest son. She was looking after the affairs of state of which she took full advantage. She is the only Empress whose effigy can be seen with the Emperor on the coins struck in Jahangir's period. The observation of Sir Thomas Roe, the British Ambassador at the Court of Jahangir, quoted earlier is not far wrong.

When Akbar married the daughter of the Raja of Amber in 1562, he was not thinking in terms of Hindu-Muslim interaction, for if he had been, he should have encouraged intermarriages between his nobles too, why confine it to himself or to his sons? The year 1562 is the time when he was under pressure by his Muslim nobles who were raising their heads against Shi'aism which was being encouraged

by Bairam Khan his Guardian, the trusted friend of his father. It should also be remembered that one of the conditions on which the Shah of Persia had given aid to Humayun for the re-conquest of Hindustan was to convert the country into a Shia State. Akbar was desperate to recruit an outside element in his Army to counter these rivalries that were raising their head in his court among their followers in the Army. Bairam Khan's conduct in executing Tardi Beg, the Governor of Delhi was hostile act as far as the Turkish element of the Army was concerned. Akbar's success with Kachawaha and Rathore Rajputs was also due to the rivalries between the Rajput Rajas themselves. Two years after his marriage in Amber, the Raja of Bikaner, a Rathore Rajput, offered his daughter. The proximity of these two states or principalities, to Delhi is very significant. They were the closest to Delhi. And were seeking protection from their own kind.

Akbar's father had a lot to do with this connection with Rajputs. He had fled to Rajputana after his defeat from Sher Shah Suri, and from beyond Chitor made his way to Sindh to Umarkot, where Akbar was born. He had advised Akbar to befriend these people who had given him protection and passage, were hardy and proud, and had not much else beyond, rock and sand and camel bush, to sustain themselves. Akbar had this drummed into him from the day he was born — in a Rajput House, of Rana of Umarkot, a Kachawaha Rajput, the same as Amber (Jaipur).

To go back to Aurangzeb — he made no pretence that he was not a strict Muslim, but not bigoted, or why would he have allowed his youngest and favourite son to marry a Hindu Princess who practised the Puja Pat (Hindu prayer rituals) not far from the quarters of her father-in-law the Emperor Aurangzeb. He had written several letters to his father asking him to relieve him from his duties, if he considered him the cause of intrigues, as it was doing a great deal of harm to the stability of the Empire. He had asked him not to declare anyone his successor or let one act as such (Dara Shikoh), as it was against the tradition of the House of Taimur. The tradition was that the Assembly of nobles elected one from among the claimants. The ablest usually got there. After the declaration of the new Emperor he ordered the funeral and burial ceremonies to start. The body of the dead was never taken out of the palace gate but a breach was made in one of the side walls and through that the body was taken out to the spot where it was to be interned. Shahjahan paid no heed to these matters. The intrigue took such a shape in the end that it led to war — Dara Shikoh versus the other three, led by the ablest, Aurangzeb. The Rajput Rajas were divided, they stuck to their personal loyalties, but the Emperor's Army was identified with Dara Shikoh. Its defeat by the 'others' was not a good omen. A house divided usually doesn't last long.

Dara was defeated and then later what happened to him is known. He had to be executed because of the pressure from the Muslim clergy who were all on the side of Aurangzeb, in whom they saw their champion against the 'confusing' philosophical approach of Dara Shikoh, who was a scholar of repute, but was being used by the anti-Muslim element as their champion. Because of refusals to interact with the rulers, on a large scale, by the Brahmin priesthood of the Hindu caste system, the Muslim conquerors were really a 'military camp' and there was no justification of government or politics — it was a Martial Law regime and the Chief Martial Law Administrator was the Emperor — his word was law. He made laws and governed according to them merely out of kindness. No one possessed anything: everything belonged to the Emperor. He could depose anyone he liked. The Governors were appointed by him and removed by him — there was no such thing as a hereditary right. There are clear examples of this in history. The Empire was ruled by the sword and the practice of justice was also by the sword. Admit-

tedly a revenue system was there, law courts were there and certain customs, forms and traditions were maintained but at the head of it all (or at the bottom of it all) was "one man's rule". The Emperor was supreme. This attitude turned Akbar's head in old age who bracketed himself with God — the work of sycophants around him.

Aurangzeb's letters to his son Kam Baksh the youngest, during his old age are 'pathetic' — he is so disillusioned and disappointed by the history of his House of Taimur that he sees no future. He fought because he had to — it was a battle for survival. He was harsh to his brothers because the atmosphere at the court demanded it — the Muslim clergy was up in arms and were demanding the enforcement of Muslim conduct within the court itself. Both brothers were indulgent. An unbiased student of history will have to admit that Aurangzeb was also fighting to save the Empire which his grandfather through too much indulgence and his father through his intrigues, had weakened. It went after him in 1707 it is true, but it still took 150 years before the new rulers — The British, were able to hoist their flag on the rampart of the Red Fort palace in Delhi. He must have laid some firm foundations in the 50 years that he ruled that it took his descendants 150 years to destroy it.

Akbar can be seen wearing rings in his ears and necklaces round his neck in old age. His son Jahangir not only loaded himself with such ornaments but wore rings in all his fingers when he got weighed in gold on his birthdays. Shahjahan built palaces but he did not indulge in such behaviour and was probably the best general that the House of Taimur produced; after becoming Emperor and losing his wife. Aurangzeb was the closest to Babar who founded the dynasty but he had to rule an Empire that his great ancestors had not dreamt of.

Akbar was the most politically minded and the bravest man amongst them. He was ruthless, threw the man he loved most, his foster brother, Adham Khan, for raising his hand on him on a controversy over the ramparts, till his skull was smashed and then told his foster-mother what he had done. It is he who destroyed Chitor for ever. He built his Fatehpur Sikri and took off in his Din-e-Ilahi cloud to die a sad disillusioned man.

Credit must go to Mirza Man Singh of Amber, his best friend, for his courage and friendship to Akbar. He is the only one who became a Mirza — one of the family, and was the nearest noble to Akbar. When asked to joint the cult of Din-e-Ilahi, his answer was brief and to the point: "Your Majesty, I only know of two religions, Islam your faith and Hinduism my faith — I know of no other faith." Brave man to say it to a man, with such sudden fits of rage as Akbar, and a good friend to have made his point with such subtlety and delicacy. The Emperor said nothing — his best friend had told him the truth — Din-e-Ilahi was a failure. Akbar died soon after that — a broken hearted man. He had gone too far and got lost in the corridors of Fatehpur Sikri. But he had done more than that, he had put the Muslim nobles and clergy at the court on the alert and had given a uniting factor — a call — a cry — Islam in danger. A similar call, 300 years later, out of fear of Hindu domination, split the country again and gave birth to the areas that are today Pakistan and Bangladesh (which used to be East Pakistan where the Muslim League was founded in Dacca, in 1906, out of fear of Hindu domination from Calcutta). It is fear that created the Priest and then the soldiers to protect the wealth of the Houses of God and fight wars in the name of religion. So why condemn poor Aurangzeb alone; we are all to blame. All he was — was not a hypocrite. His first Prime Minister was a Hindu. Most of his high ranking administrative officers were Hindu Rajputs, yet he is blamed by Western and Indian writers of history for bigotry. He forced 'Zakat' and 'Usher' on all the Muslims and there-

fore had to introduce once again 'Jazia' on the non-Muslims. But before he did that he had removed 60 taxes — from which palaces, and forts and mausoleums and pleasure gardens were built.

He planned no great mausoleum for himself. His will said, 'Bury me in the nearest graveyard, in a simple grave with no trappings on it, open to the sky, to sun and rain. The only money to be spent on the burial is the one I leave behind in a marked leather pouch.' These were his earnings from copying the Quran and knitting prayer caps. The greatest of the Emperors of Hindustan has the simplest grave with nothing over him. In fact, there is no grave to be seen — just a bush growing in the middle of an area that contains his bodily remains. And yet thousands and thousands of tourists go to see the Emperor's humble grave who is the son of the man and woman who lie in magnificent graves in the seventh wonder of the world, the Taj at Agra. He buried his father next to his mother in a grave more ornate than even hers — he knew his father's taste. That was the kind of man that was Aurangzeb known and styled as Alamgir — the conqueror of the world.

It was Akbar's successor Jahangir who had to face the rebellion from Mahabat Khan who had been inspired by the movement that had been launched by the Mujaddad Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (of Naqashbandiyya order) against the indulgence of the Moghul court and its neglect towards the precepts of Islam. Jahangir had him imprisoned in the Gwalior fort but when the movement spread and a man like Mahabat Khan rebelled, Jahangir sobered up. He apologized to the Sheikh and eventually took "bait" at his hand, became his disciple, reduced his drinks, a great feat for any addict, leave alone an Emperor who sat on the throne of India.

His grandson Emperor Aurangzeb became a disciple of Sheikh Mohammad Masoom, the son of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

Therefore it was the controversy over the Din-e-Ilahi — an invention of Akbar — that started the religious battle between the Rulers (Muslims) and the Ruled (Hindus). By the end of Akbar's reign though Akbar's astute political policies and actual practice of tolerance had developed the faith of the Raiyat (subjects), the large majority of the Hindus, who had accepted the Muslim Moghul rule as a benevolent alien evil and were quite satisfied to be ruled in the benevolent manner — if they were destined to be ruled. Why Akbar, an astute and brilliant ruler, in his old age concocted this mixing of water and oil (Islam, Hinduism and others) and mixed religion with politics, in the manner that he did, I have never been able to fathom and I have been a student of history from a very early age: it was my favourite subject — giving me the rock of the past on which to build my edifice.

Akbar, I am sure, meant well and did it in good faith — for the solidarity and stability of the Empire that he had built, but he got carried away, a bit too far in his noble disguise and played with fire — religion in politics. He should have left the different 'fires' burning in the hearts of the people, to give them light in the dark alleys of life, but to attempt to have a glow or a combination of them was like igniting today's atom bomb. It is clear from his casual remarks to his close friends like Mirza Man Singh of Amber that he realized that he had erred. He was intelligent and experienced enough to realize that he had made a blunder in old age.

He should have encouraged and even 'forced' his interaction at all levels of the society in his empire. But he was very jealous of his Army's recruiting area and never allowed anyone else except his immediate family to mix with the Hindus. He was shrewd enough to keep the various components of his army in separate identities and to keep them in control. This behaviour of Akbar's has not been highlighted by an historian that I know of.

I hope that I have proved by point that physical intermarriages of individuals are possible but to mix the marriage of mind (belief) in the man-God relationship of an individual, was asking for too much from an ordinary mortal. We are all accidents of birth. None of us has selected our fathers and mothers, a house, a country, or a language or a religion. We inherited all these important factors in our makeup without having had any say in the matter. When we grew up we had an identity — an inherited one. It kept adjusting itself according to environment in which we lived and the kind of education that we receive: this is the greatest factor which affects our minds — which is the controlling factor of all our actions in life.

Most of my friends are Hindus and Christians, because of my early environments. I love them — I respect their belief, they respect mine. We have walked hand in hand all our lives but if it ever came to anyone asking me to change my belief — the manner in which I practise the approach, to gain peace and guidance, from my Being — I think I would come to a halt on that point in my relationship with that friend.

My coming to Pakistan is a proof of this approach of mind. I actually believe, though history, that to be able to live in peace, to me that is more mind than money and all that is attached to it, as a Muslim, it was essential that a Homeland must be there for this identity, so that they could live as equals and therefore easily as friends.

In a system where more in number rule and the 'others' remain a minority, then having read the history of my land, with some objectivity, I realized that with the mentality in large sections of the majority it would not have been possible for Muslims to live with that dignity that God gave to every individual. The coming into being of Pakistan may not have been a blessing for all the Muslims of the subcontinent as it is being proved by events today. But a Muslim Homeland, from where a cry could be raised in the community of the world, 'hands off the Muslims in minority', could have been protection for them, which would have been impossible otherwise, all Muslims having become 'an internal affair'.

Akbar's blunder, meant in good faith, one ideal solution from his point of view, of the main problem of his empire, had been subject of my study from an early age. I admired Aurangzeb not because of his title of Alamgir, or because of his other exploits, of bravery — killing a 'must' (out of control) elephant alone or killing a tiger alone with a dagger in the jungle, but because of his 'farman' which is there to read which has been mentioned earlier — 'to you your faith to me mine... all leading to the same God; what had that got to do with the running of the administration of a state...' Historians who are quick to condemn him, to suit their argument, forget such passages. They even forget that the implementors of his high policies were Hindus — mainly from the Rajput stock.

I have never given up my Hindu friends. I have never been apologetic towards my relationship with them even after partition. What has this got to do with my being born with the identity of a Muslim? They have respected me for my prayers and beliefs. They understood when I came to Pakistan severing connections of identity with my birth place, of everything that makes life — because of a mental belief, an approach, which gave peace of mind, took priority over everything else. I have visited my friends across the border regularly, in uniform and out of uniform, when as an Ambassador or a Cabinet Minister of Pakistan. Not for one moment has there been a hesitation on this issue — of friendship and past associations. I had heard from my mother and later learnt from her for the first time, that there was no stronger force than Truth. Later, I learnt for myself that there was another force equal to Truth and that was the force of Love. So subtle, so forceful, so free of bondage, yet the greatest bond, so free from geographical barriers and passport

restrictions, that it needed no defining — even if it could be defined. A practice, an endeavour and a pastime of all the poets, writers and philosophers of the world since its creation to do that, to define — a description of a state of mind and heart that could only be felt, by each individual, in his own way, and beyond the capabilities of any mortal to describe fully, up to now.

The reader might ask, what is the need of this outburst in this field at this stage? The answer is simple — a statement of truth: if it had not been this mental approach then they would have been no need to labour on this book either.

One can, if one wants to, describe what happens when hands meet. One can, if one will, describe the sudden understanding between two individuals, the conflagrant moment when two Selves come into the sunlight of unity, when nothing happens in the physical plan, unless the eyes, if in some kind of web, which catches and binds everything succeed in imprinting this through its cornea on the heart. What that force is, what that something is, which produces the sensation and mark, I cannot tell, because I do not know I have only felt it, recorded it — that's all.

The identity of the people that I knew goes back to about two centuries, when the great House of Taimur, the Moghul Empire, with the capital at Delhi, disintegrated. The country was broken into a thousand pieces and out of the chaos rose, by a feat of history, the States and the ruling Princes of the days that I am writing about.

The largest state in area was Kashmir covering 84,258 square miles with a population of nearly four millions, 95% of whom were Muslims. The ruler the Maharaja, was a Dogra of Rajput (Hindu) Cachawah origin. The second largest in area was Hyderabad with an area of 83,698 square miles and a population of nearly 14 millions people of whom 93% were Hindus. The ruler was a Muslim, styling himself Nizam. With Berar it had the largest area — nearly 86,000 square miles.

There lay the problem which was to have its repercussions, within two decades, when the partition took place in August 1947, on the slogan of religion. But not really. After the acceptance of the separate electorate in Minto's time — 1905-1910, When the British Parliament passed the Indian Council Act of 1909, popularly known as the Morley-Minto Reforms. Surely it must have been clear to the people, the Hindus and the Muslims that they had been politically divided. There was now a rail track to the destination of independence but one rail was Hindu (Congress) and the other was Muslim (Muslim League), and everyone had been taught that parallel lines never meet, so how could that track meet. The partition was won on a political conference table — by Congress (mostly Hindus) and Muslim League (Muslims). The States were the only places where there were no apparent differences among the various religious factions. Muslim and Hindu riots hardly ever took place. And yet in the neighbouring British India a violent outburst between the two was a common affair. This is important to note, as I will be dealing with this point later — confederation of three independent States of a Princestan, a Pakistan, and a Hindustan, may have saved the killings, the bitterness and scars it has left behind, if between these two states of Hindustan and Pakistan had been the balancing factor of Princestan, which was in the mind of some people like Wavel the Viceroy and Auckinleck the Commander-in-Chief. But more of it later. I will go back now to the theme of the States.

The area of this peninsular is about two million square miles, of which two-fifths belonged to the domains of more than five hundred princely houses. In the States there was a definite rational feeling which went far to mitigate the differences of

race and creed. While in the British Provinces nationalism was largely a matter of politics.

The Charters of the States were their Treaties made with the Honorable East India Company and the British Government. While it was impossible to class all the States under one heading, there was common identity and a common ground between small chieftainships covering a few square miles and large principalities such as Hyderabad and Kashmir. As I have mentioned earlier, Highness or no-Highness, Salutes or no-Salutes (both dependent on the whims of the Paramount Power — as will be illustrated later), practically all had unrestricted powers in their territories, and therefore mentally they were all tarred by the same brush.

While the collective opinion of the Princes carried weight with the British Administration with regard to reforms, they took no part in the agitation for democratic or representative government. Their main concern was the well-being of their own people in their own lands.

There were of course several different categories among the Princes. Those who claimed ancient race also claimed descent from the Sun, the Moon and Fire. Slowly and very reluctantly, after many battles and chivalries, self sacrifices, in which even the women took part, they had to submit to the Turkish and Moghul conquerors. When they disappeared, they transferred their allegiance to the new power — the British. Foremost in this race of changing allegiance have been the Princes of Rajputana — they learnt fast to be loyal to whoever flew his standard from the ramparts of the Delhi and Agra Palaces.

Some of the other Rulers had as ancestors those famous Moghul Governors who started establishing their independent States at the demise of the last great Moghul Emperor as early as 1707. The deluge came after 1738 when Nadir Shah of Persia paid a visit with his army and realized what a degenerate state the Empire had become and what a God-sent opportunity he had to pack up the Peacock throne and all that went with it — which was a few thousand camels of the treasures of the Moghul Empire, back to Persia, after creating a pretext for murder of his troops in Delhi. He sat in the small mosque, the golden mosque, opposite the Delhi Gate of the Red Fort, with his sword unsheathed and his troops on the loose in Delhi, slaughtering and picking up anything and everything they could till this Muslim king of Persia sheathed his sword. From that day onwards the Emperors and his Empire were in name. The Persian Muslim King by his act destroyed what little prestige was left of the Empire and its head, and later the frequent battles that took place between the sons and successors of great Aurangzeb is a good example of it. The first to establish himself as an independent was the trusted servant of Aurangzeb, the shrewd chin Qulich Khan Asaf Jah, the last 'Kingmaker', the last pillar of the Moghul Empire, who did not receive the title of Nizam (from Nizamuddin), till 1718 from Mohammad Shah. The dynasty of the Nizam of Hyderabad was founded in 1724 by a Qamar-ud-Din whose father Ghazi-ud-Din Firuz Jang had migrated from Samarkand during the reign of Aurangzeb.

There was another category of large principalities of Marhatta chieftains whose forebearers were raiding barons with humble beginnings, like the Gaekwar of Baroda, the Maharajas of Holkar, Indore, Scindia and Gwalior, carving their principalities out of the chaos following the collapse of the Moghuls. They were Hindus from Maharashtra areas of Poona, Bombay, Gujrat. They protected anybody from whom they could raise their 'Chauth' (one-fourth). The mighty Rajput Princes of Chitor and Jodhpur paid them 'Chauth'. The French General Comte de Biogne of Scindia took the surrender from the Maharaja of Jaipur and his sword and thousands of gold mohars hoarded in their treasure chests from the days of the famous Mirza Man Singh of Amber, the favourite of Akbar. He built the Jaigarh

fort next to the Amber Palace and fort, especially to house his treasures which he was accumulating — personal gifts from the Emperor and from his 27 Parganas allotted to him by his friend Akbar, in exchange for his territory and Chauth.

The Comte de Biogne was not inclined to fight the English and returned to his homeland in 1791. Today a three elephants fountain in the square of his town in France stands in his memory — but the elephants no longer trumpet war sounds nor gush out water from their trunks as they used to do.

Two centuries later this Jaigarh fort ('garh' itself means for, but such are the ways of knowledge these days and once a mistake is made, it is amazing how it sticks like a scandal). Man Singh started it and Jai Singh II finished it — it took nearly a century to complete. But more about it later. It is a tourist attraction today because of the publicity it received in 1975 when the Indian Government raided it and searched it from nook to corner (nook) for the alleged fabulous treasures that were supposed to be hidden and housed there, including a few tons of Moghul Gold Mohars collected by the Rajas over two centuries, gifts from the Moghul masters and the revenue they collected from the Jagirs allotted to them. The Indian Government found nothing — the treasure that may have been there evaporated in the same manner as the Princely order did after the Partition, particularly after the constitutional amendment of 1972.

While we are on the subject of Rajputana Princes it should be remembered that it was Allauddin Khilji (Muslim) who as early as 1290 besieged Chitor and destroyed the Sisodhis of Chitor and then again it was the Muslim King Bahadur Khan of Gujrat who again retook Chitor. Later it was Humayun who came to the assistance of the Rana of Chitor against the same Muslim King of Gujrat. But finally it was Akbar — the son of Humayun who reduced Chitor to what it is today — symbol of defiance and chivalry but reduced to ruins and the abode of wild animals in the wilderness.

Chitor was important and Sisodhis were defiant because they lay on the route to Gujrat, a Muslim stronghold from early days, because of sea power of the Arab Muslims hitting the Western shores of mid-Hindustan. From Chitor the trading route went through Ajmere and from there to Agra and Delhi. The Sisodhis were the ones who felt the cut of Muslim steel on Rajput flesh first. This they never forgot — one never forgets ones first love and first 'contact'. And it is for this reason that they were so anti-Muslim — to them Turks, Arabs, Persians and Moghuls were all the same thing — alien Muslims. The other Rajput Rajas just as good, had no reason to be bothered and so when they realized the Muslim power to the undefeatable they came into the Muslim camp and offered friendship: their daughters in marriage. The highest compliment that anyone can pay.

At the last battle of Chitor, when Akbar was determined to reduce the resistance of the Sisodhis for good, it was the Rajputs that were pitched against one another, the Sisodhis of Chitor were being taken on by the Cachawahs of Amber (later Jaipur) and the Rathors of Marwar (South Kingdom) Jodhpur and Bikaner, related to the Moghuls by marriages. Akbar married the daughter of the Raja of Amber in 1562 and two years later that of the Raja of Bikaner. His son Jahangir was married to the daughter of the Raja of Jodhpur. So Shahjahan, the Palace Builder and the builder of Taj, was three-quarters Rajput. The marble for the Taj was provided to the maternal-grandson by the Raja of Jodhpur for his grand-daughter-in-law's mausoleum in Agra. In 1564 Akbar had married the Princess of Bikaner, another Rathore Rajput — Bikaner was founded by a younger son of a Jodhpur Raja. Marriage is not supposed to be one sided, it is with mutual consent. Did any Moghul Prince ask for the hand of a daughter of a Sisodhi Rajput? As it has been mentioned earlier, it was because of the bitterness caused by feuds that such a

question did not arise. And if it was a question of Muslims and Hindus, then it is again proving the point of caste and creed prejudices.

There is an interesting story about the last battle of Chitor in Akbar's time. When the battle was raging fiercely Akbar sent one of his noble A.D.C's from his camp to the Turkish overall commander in the field, a venerable gentleman with a white beard wearing a white turban over his steel helmet resting under a tree. He got up at the arrival of the royal messenger who asked, 'The Emperor wants to know how the battle is progressing.' The Turkish commander's reply was prompt and brief, 'Tell His Majesty that the battle, by the Grace of Allah, is going fine — kafir is killing kafir (Cachawahs of Jaipur, Rathores of Jodhpur and Bikaner and Bhattis of Jaisalmer were fighting for Akbar and killing Sisodhis). This was the reason why for a long time the Sisodhi Rajputs never intermarried with those Rajputs who gave their daughters to the Moghul Princes. The Moghuls had a complex about the Sisodhis of Chitor as well. More about this complex later.

They rank the highest amongst the Rajput Princes as being the elder branch of Surga Varusa. The ruling Chief is considered by Hindus to be the direct representative of Rama, from whom was descended Kanak Sen, who was the founder of the Udaipur family in about 144 A.D. They boast that they never gave their daughter to any Moghul Emperor and put up the most prolonged resistance against the Muslims. They belong to the Sisadia Branch of the Gehlot clan. In 1193 the sovereignty of Chitor was given to the younger branch of the family because of the feud within the clan, the elder having been expelled, founded the city of Dungarpur. In 1201 the Chief of the Clan Rahup changed the title of prince from Rawal to Rana. And the territory was known as Mewar (Middle Kingdom) which it was of Rajputana.

Udaipur, "The City of Sunrise," as a State suffered severely at different periods both from foreign invasions and internal disputes. It was devastated alternately by Scindia and Holkar, Marhattas, until it was rendered almost desolate. They signed a treaty with the British in 1817 which has the word "Subordinate" clearly used. 'Subordinate co-operation' is a phrase which was met with for the first time in official documents in the time of the Marquis of Hastings. The treaty concluded by the Governor General with the Maharana of Udaipur states that the latter will always act in subordinate cooperation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy and will not have any connection with other Chiefs or States. This was done to put right any mighty and superior ideas he had about himself of his State. The Muslim Moghuls were more alien to them even after they had defeated their Rana Singha and others crushingly in battles than the light coloured English. Was this humble submission due to the complex of the skin or the awe of the power which they could not fathom yet, which came across the seas? They surrendered so easily to the white-skined English officers with the dark skined soldiers. They must have been extremely hard pressed at the time.

Chitor was the capital of this senior Rajput State till 1568 when Akbar destroyed it. Maharana Udai Singh repaired and built a refuge at Udaipur, where he had previously built an artificial lake. His palace, built of granite and marble stands on a ridge elevated above the margin of the lake. Enough of Chitor and Udaipur, of Mewar and its bitterness towards the Moghuls, but the back of the Rajputs was actually broken by Babar in 1527 when after consolidating himself in Delhi he defeated them in a decisive battle when they were led by Rana Singha of Mewar, the Chief of the Sisodhi clan. They and the Rana of Chitor particularly, never forgave the Moghuls for this defeat where their chief was slain on the battlefield. Others compromised and made up with the new Rulers but the Rana of Chitor and the Moghuls never trusted one another, even when they had submitted and sent

their heir to the Moghul Court to attend on the Emperor. There is an interesting story about this in Jahangir's time but I must move on and leave this story to be told later somewhere in the book.

We three, i.e. sister, brother and myself, have an early association, of a kind, with the House of Udaipur, through Miss Williams, our governess. I remember so well that she went to Udaipur regularly for Christmas and New Year and always came back happy and satisfied. Once she did not look so cheerful. I was with her when she told my mother in a low voice after her return, "My Bappu is not well", and that when she was taking leave this time he embraced her, and kissed her and said, "Betti I am not for long now. But HE will take care of you. He gave me a small bag full of gold coins and some precious stones and sent a man as escort with me upto Delhi." I think it was for this reason that she had some high influential connections among the British Raj. Sir Malcom Hailey (later Lord Hailey) and Lady Hailey were great friends of hers. And I think it was this connection that brought my mother close to them too and they visited Pataudi when he was the Governor of Punjab.

Before I got carried away by the charm of Rajputana and particularly Chitor I was discussing the various categories of the Princes and was explaining how the Marhattas had overrun Rajputana. By 1756, they had possession of Ajmere, the capital of Moghul province of Mewar and the place where the premier Muslim sufi Saint — Khawaja Mueen-ud-Din Chishti — has his tomb; visited by hundreds of thousands every year — of all class, creed and colour. They, the Marhattas, had been called in by one of the Rathore factions. By 1803, all Rajputana, except the north-west, had been virtually brought under the Marhattas, who exacted tribute, held cities to ransom, annexed territory, and extorted subsidies. Rajputana afterwards came under terrible sufferance of the Pindharis (Muslim free looters) who were eventually subdued by the British and their remnants were given the territory of Tonk State like the Rohillas (also Muslims of the same kind) further north carved for themselves the territory of Rampur State.

While this was going on the Chiefs of Jodhpur (Rathore) and Jaipur (Cachawah) practically ruined themselves by a feud for the hand of a Princess of Udaipur. Again more about this later.

By 1817, Hastings had not only put down the Pindharis but also compelled the Marhattas to withdraw from Rajputana. It is for this reason that they were the first to welcome the British and the more loyal were the one's who were closer to Delhi, the old capital of India and the navel of the world, and the centre of power. They were turned into many principalities, in the areas of Malwa (Central India — Madhaya Pardesh), Maharashtra and Gujrat. Scindia was confined to the State of Gwalior, Holkar to Indore and Gaekwar in Gujrat to Baroda.

After the submission of the Marhattas other Princes were deliberately put upon their throne by the British. After the first Sikh war the old Moghul Afghan-Sikh Province of Kashmir was given, for a song, half a million sterling in cash, for valuable service rendered in the battle by being absent at the crucial time in the battle, to Ghulab Singh — who had risen from modest beginnings at the Court of Ranjit Singh in Lahore, through his ability and cunning to become the Rajput (dogra) Ruler of Jammu and the leading General in the Sikh Army.

The great principality of Mysore state also owed its existence solely to the British. Haider Ali, a brilliant soldier of mixed Arab-Afghan blood, was virtually asked to take over the original throne of Mysore from its Hindu ruler because of maladministration — no different to what we have been witnessing, before him and after him. The Pahlawis of Iran could be the more recent example. It was a common feature in Europe as well. Haider Ali was very fortunate to have his son

an equally brilliant soldier and a statesman — Tippu Sultan. He is styled by some western writers as 'half-lunatic' — but this son of Haider Ali must have had a great deal of method in his madness, as he drove the British raving mad by not only proving superior to them, or more than equal in battle, but also in administration and diplomacy. It is for this reason that he became their vital target. With him around they did not consider themselves secure in India. He was as 'half-lunatic', according to English, as a man by the name of Napoleon Bonaparte was, at about the same time in France, and much later another 'lunatic' by the name of Hitler in Germany, who took on the world, eventually got destroyed, but in the process changed the map of the world, and destinies of people. Credit must be given when and where it is due. An adversary, who gets under the skin, is usually a very clever 'lunatic', like Gaddafi today. These clever lunatics, like clever fools, are very dangerous to some.

The father and son by winning battles and friends made Mysore strong which had to be destroyed because when Tippu Sultan was the Ruler, he was the only one who had the imagination and the foresight to appreciate that this new element of power, the British, were different to others — they had sea power, which was the main strength assisted by the slavish mentality of the Natives of the land, who always sided with the fresh and new faces rather than their own.

Tippu wrote of the menace to the Sultan of Turkey and the Shah of Persia and even approached Napoleon's France but the wind and luck was on the side of the British, and with the help of the locals like the Nizam of Hyderabad they managed to put an end to the menace of Tippu — he was killed in the battle of Seringapattam, leading his troops to the last. He is buried next to his father in the same place and has left a name which is on the banner of many regiments and in the streets of many towns in this continent.

It was in this battle of Seringapattam that a Colonel Welessley, later the famous Duke of Wellington, led a battalion of my Ist Punjab Regiment. They were all high caste Brahmins then, the name Punjab Regiment didn't come till 1862 when the men from Punjab were recruited in it.

Tippu left behind two sons. They became the wards of the Marquis of Cornwallis. They were first kept in Vellore and then after the sepoy mutiny, at the very first as early as 1804, they were moved to Calcutta and were housed in the estate now known as Woodlands, next to the Governor General's estate of Belvedere. It is this very place and the house where I first stayed in 1933. The house had been bought by Bhaiya's grandfather (the Maharaja of Cooch Behar) from Tippu's family. I have another connection with Tippu — the wrought iron bridges in the grounds of Culford Hall were all made from the cannons brought back by Cornwallis, who lived for a while in this House, which later became the residence of my friend, the present Earl of Cadogan's forefathers and where I stayed when I was at Sandhurst.

Now! where were we — the reader must forgive me for these hurdles and ditches in my steeplechase, but it must be remembered that this is a story of Princes and not a book of history for examinations. I was writing of the Princes and their categories and a number of them rode in steeplechase, hunted and played polo, so these ditches and turns and twists which some 'Reviewer' might term ramblings, are in keeping with the spirit of the story in this book.

The last category of them is the great landlords and the minor chieftains, and the feudal families, who wishing to presume the comparative autonomy they had contrived to assert when the Empire fell and disintegrated, voluntarily joined the British, demanding protection from their new powerful neighbours in return for

their allegiance, like the Sikh Punjab States and others of the days I am writing about.

With so many different interests concerned, it was natural that the various treaties and alliances should differ and the obligation of the states towards Britain be as diverse as the needs which forced or led them into the Empire.

The Mutiny of 1857 broke the links between the two countries or the people; that personal relationship between two co-equal merchants came to an end, particularly in British India. With it was swept away much of the friendliness and hospitality, the knowledge of each other's character, lives and objectives, that came from familiar everyday intercourse. To all intents and purposes, the army took charge, which reduced the intercourse between the peoples, Indian and British, at all levels, and the outcome was the tragic complex between the two: for the Indian, one of inferiority and for the British, one of superiority — an atmosphere of unequals developed — 'the Native' and the 'Sahib'. In the Native states this was not so bad, because they dealt with their 'own man'.

The 1833 Act which had provided that no Indian should be debarred from holding any post in the Company's service became a 'scrap of paper'. The Mutiny had embittered relations between the two races — 'white' and 'black', expressions like 'niggers' and 'wogs' could be heard in heated discussions even in my days of youth. The Princely States did not live in isolation and the wind that blew in 'Red' India crossed into 'Yellow' India too. Many Princes suffered from this complex, though the British went out of their way to patronize them — they belonged to the 'Loyal' category; the doubtful went on the planks of the gibbet or the oblivious dark corners of poverty — stripped of everything. I mention all this here because this is the first thing I felt when I grew up and mixed with the Sahibs, Memsahibs and the Princes. I found them hesitant to mix freely, compared to some of us who were mixing with them in schools, regiments and polo grounds, everyday and on most nights till dawn. It was all a question of environment and association.

In 1909 the Morley-Minto Reforms gave Muslims and Hindus separate electorates which was the beginning of the Partition, which came in 1947. By the acceptance of these reforms, a separate political identity had been accepted.

The World War I of 1914-1918 changed the atmosphere. The role played by the Indian Army was appreciated. The Princes, feudal by birth, fought for the people who believed in democratic principles but also, one hoped, for the will of the wisp labelled 'self-determination'!

In 1918 Mr. Montague, a liberal Jew, had made his famous speech in the House of Commons, promising 'the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire', after which came the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. The Indian politician was quick on the uptake and demanded immediate self-government.

This was bound to affect the politically minded people in the Native States, some Princes were not idle on the subject of studying the course of the new minds of a political nature that were gathering in the territories round them.

The Princes who themselves with their troops had taken part in the war on the side of the Crown, were represented in the Peace Treaty at Versailles in 1918.

The Simon Commission and three successive round table conferences proposed a Federation of self-governing States. This placed the ruling Princes in a quandary — if they refused the Federation, a right which they had, the whole scheme would have been rendered useless and the British liberals, who had done a great deal to get the self-determination vessel that far in the rough waters, would have labelled them as the executioners of democracy. If, on the other hand, they waived their Treaty privileges and entered the Federation without protection against superior

numbers and interests entirely opposed to their own, they would be forced to submit to eventual absorption in a democratic system in which neither they nor their people had much confidence and for which the majority of the latter were certainly not prepared.

In the end — they had no alternative — the States accepted, in principle, the possibility of Federation, but made it a condition that their individual treaties with the British Crown should remain in force and that the independence of their territories should continue to be guaranteed.

It is when they were in this dilemma that I got to know some of them in the early thirties. But ignorance is indeed bliss, sometimes, and most of them certainly had no idea of what was going on in the field of 'self-determination'. They were quite content with their state and states and were busy in the perseverance of their innumerable hobbies, but the hobby that I was interested in was the game of Polo and so my friendship developed with those who played polo and kept horses for racing and pig-sticking — it was the noble animal horse that made my friendships for me, like it made me become a professional soldier. If there had been no horsed cavalry I doubt if I would have joined the British Indian Army. I may have been tempted to join some state cavalry regiment or accept an offer of some ruling Prince who had a large string of polo ponies to work in the state in some capacity. I was offered a very pleasant and lucrative job by a big Prince in early 1938, but by that time the bug of professionalism had bitten me too deeply and I declined it with gratitude — more on this subject later somewhere.

This early thirties was an interesting period — as some of the Princes I got to know were politically minded, like Bhopal, Patiala, Navanagar and even Kashmir in a way, though his position was different and a peculiar one to others — his state was the only one that had important international neighbours: Afghanistan, close-by Russia, Tibet and China. Kashmir was the largest in area and had international boundaries, entrusted to the trusted friend Ghulab Singh in 1846, when the East India Company had its hands full of trouble and empty pockets because of the wars which it had taken on in order to secure its trade. They must have been very hard pressed to accept half a million sterling for an area larger than continental France, lock, stock and barrel — and more beautiful than Switzerland and other beautiful places put together. It was this Prince who wanted me to come to him. The story will be related later — it is amusing and brings out a point or two, which would be out of place here.

The old Gaekwar of Baroda was interested in the subject of self-determination, and tripod-Federation or anything towards progress. They were a unique couple, his wife Maharani Sahiba (Baro-Ma), Ma's mother, was so active in this field that she was financing the Congress on the quiet! Ma wasn't politically minded, not even as Regent and Bhaiya, her son, the ruler of Cooch Behar, my friend, was so dedicated to the welfare of his subjects that he detested the political element in Calcutta trying to 'educate' and use his subjects in this field: mostly by agitation in his state.

At that time there was hardly any Muslim League so one heard of the British and Congress India, but there was a third and important section of opinion about which little was known, this was the Native States. They may have been an autocratic group, but it did comprise two-fifths of the land and one quarter of the population of India. Within the Federation, they would have been, of primal necessity and would have been very cautious towards the 'democratic' group of Princes, with the British type of parliament system, without the economic and educational background of the latter — the British. It would have meant a virtual

dictatorship of a handful of educated types with money, or backed by those who had money, an item so important in any society leave alone one as poor as India.

As titular head of these divergent forces, the Crown, if it was to fulfil its Treaty obligations to the States, had not only to retain a Viceroy in India but was obliged to provide military protection — a force independent of the future Federal Army, in case the Princes were attacked. On the other hand as the crown was ultimately responsible, it had to interfere, as it had always done, in autocratic rather than democratic fashion, in definite cases of misrule. So the Federation was already divided, even without considering the Muslim League's Pakistan.

Coming from hindsight now, was not the Triangular Federation as thought out by people like Auckinleck and Wavell in discussions, even with youngsters like me — of Hindustan, Pakistan and Princestan, the answer? Would it not have saved the lives of thousands and thousands and the migration of 20 million people? Could not have this awkward birth of Princestan provided the cushion between the two political opponents in the boxing ring, one representing the Congress and the other the Muslim League? For after all, after accepting the separate Electorate system in 1909 were not these two parties the two rails of the track on which the vehicle of Independence was moving to the station or the destination, of self-determination? They may have been moving in the same direction but in a parallel manner — the tracks never meet! This is exactly what happened. Had the principle of separate electorate come about because the Congress was only prepared to give the Muslims a 30% weightage in the central Legislative, when the Muslims were demanding 33-1/2%? The whole thing broke down on 3-1/2%! Would joint electorate system have made any difference? God alone knows. But I do think that the separation and the Partition would not have been so bloody.

But this Triangular System would have only worked if the States themselves could have worked out a confederation among themselves; a unity of policy and common front so that none of them would have had to stand alone.

The Chamber of Princes at Delhi could only have been effective if it had been a Chamber representative of the opinion of all the States, irrespective of how big or small they were. But unfortunately it lacked unity, mainly because of the complexes that had developed among the big ones — the 21 gunners — the two biggest, Hyderabad and Kashmir suffered the most. They never attended the meetings of the noble Chamber, the 19, 17, 15, 13, 11 etc. gunners all had their quota. What the guns had to do with all that I then couldn't understand, and neither quite clearly even today, as I write. All should have been there. Five hundred and sixty-five of the States is not a large number specially when half of them would like to have sent proxy for the simple reason that the proceedings would have been well over their heads and some of them would have been medically unfit to take the strain of sitting in one seat for long. But at least the sense of participation and unity of purpose would have been there. Unity in Adversity is the motto of the largest Muslim State in the world — Indonesia — whose territories were ruled with an iron hand by the Dutch for 350 years. They won because of Unity of Purpose; I was a witness of that in 1945 and 1946. But at least the British by their 'Titular Policy' and 'gun salute' and medals of war had managed to keep these Princes in the same state of mind as they found their ancestors a century back. Everyone for himself and good luck to the others — forgetting that in this one chain, there were 565 links, and the chain as a whole is as strong as the weakest link.

They had been protected and patronized so much by the Paramount Power that they had ceased to practise the one thing that keeps one fit — struggle, struggle for survival. They had become 'soft' and some of them lived in fantasies. They had

forgotten the practice of convenience and 'Maslehat' (Advisability), and the complete absence of conscience, on the part of the Paramount Power, when dealing with such situations. They were soon — in 1947 — to receive the greatest shock of their life, when to please the bigger party, they the one-third were literally written off. When it started dawning on the Princes as to what was in store for them, it was too late and to ensure that they could not organize and be a last minute nuisance, in desperate haste the date of the Independence was put forward from June 1948 to August 1947. Except for this — to keep the one-third under shock and make them sign the necessary documents of accession, their death warrants quickly — there was no tangible reason for such a rush. The reason put forward, later by the last Viceroy, Mountbatten, was that the Armed Forces were getting restive and their loyalty to execute the orders could not be relied upon. This I am afraid is not acceptable and has not come out in any official papers even after 30 years. And even a remark like that is a shame and most unfair for this great institution, the old British Indian Army. Even in the bloodiest of killings in 1947, mainly because of the rush 'to get it over', they stood steadfast — above class and creed and there are very many instances in which the Muslim soldiers saved non-Muslims and the non-Muslims did likewise — proving the comradeship; something quite unknown to the politicians, or to a sailor — Mountbatten — who had no experience of India and was in a rush to make his mark as the 'last Viceroy' — which he could only do pleasing the Congress High Command.

Why was the subject of the Native States, handed over by the Crown representative — the Viceroy, Mountbatten — to Sardar Patel, the Home Minister of the Congress and his assistant V. P. Menon, three months before the date that it should have been handed over, after independence, in spite of the severest protest from the head of the Political Department. All this head of political department — Corfield — could do was to go to Whitehall, under a pretext, and put directly to the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister — Attlee — what was going on and get their secret permission to destroy all records held in the Political Department, which could be embarrassing to the Princes in the future. This was the only kind act towards the Princes that I can record, by the Paramount Power, on its departure.

This is the manner in which the Crown representative had conducted himself with those who had contributed towards the Crown and his Government to survive as long as it did. More facts are coming out with time of the shabby manner in which the Crown Representative — the Viceroy — completely sold out the Princes to the politicians. I write this in plain language as I am relating history, and not a diplomatic note, of some polite double meaning phrases.

Some of those who were affected are waking up to all this just now, some will never wake up, because they are in eternal sleep.

This very briefly is the history of the Princes that I got to know.

To sum up — when I grew up enough to be able to grasp what the Princes were and how the British came — the picture that I built was something like this.

Although the British first came to India less than three centuries ago, the greater part of the country was under their rule. For untold centuries India had been a great battlefield. It is still uncertain who were the earliest inhabitants. Probably they were negritos, a small dark negro-like race, resembling the Andaman islanders. The Santals and other tribes of South India, named Dravidians, came from the north-west. The two streams seem to have met each other in Central India. The Dravidians proved stronger, broke up the Kalarians and then went forward in a mighty body to the south.

The Aryans, from the north-west were the next invaders. Coming from a colder climate they prided themselves upon their fair complexion and despised the earlier inhabitants as the 'black skin'. Another name which was given to the aborigines was 'Dsayus' — enemies. So many of them were enslaved that the word 'dasu' was afterwards applied to a servant. One of the earliest tribes brought under subjection was called Sudras, and the name was extended to the whole race.

The war of invasion lasted for centuries. The Aryan chiefs not only fought with the Dasyus, but contended among themselves for mastery.

In 1526 Babar invaded India, and for about two centuries, the Moghul dynasty, the House of Taimur, which was founded was the paramount power. The East India Company was formed in 1600 A.D., towards the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I for the purpose of trade. The first settlement of the English was at Masalipatam, on the east coast, at about 1622. Madras was purchased in 1639. Three villages were bought in 1698 on the banks of the Hugli, on which Calcutta now stands. The aid of the English was sought in war by the Indian Princes, and by degrees the greater part of the country came under their rule.

I hope it will be clear from the foregoing brief revision that dynasty after dynasty succeeded each other in India, the title to power in each case being that of the sword. The English were called 'foreigners', but so were the Muslims. Going still further back, so were the Aryan Hindus.

During the long ages of the past, many crimes were committed, in the name of noble reason. They are being committed even now, under high sounding principles. It is now time that we learnt something from the past and learnt to live and let live.

It was by the Charter issued to the East India Company by Charles II, that the Company was permitted to wage war with non-Christian powers, and as a corollary acquired the legal right to enter into treaties, alliances and engagements with the Princes of India.

The earliest actual treaty is the one signed in 1723 by the Raja of Travancore and the head of the Company's factory at Anjengo. By it the contracting parties agreed to be in 'league and united in good friendship'. But Anjengo was a minor factory and the political conditions of the Malabar coast were different from those prevailing elsewhere in India.

The first treaty of importance made by the Company was that made with the Marhatta State of Sawantwari in 1730. The ruler of this principality was suffering, as was the Company, from the raids of the Angrias, a notorious family of Malabar 'pirates'.

This attempt at joint action against the 'raiders, however, did not appear to have produced much result, for three years later in 1733, the same Governor (Robert Cowen) — the President and the Governor of the Company's factory at Bombay, had to conclude with Janjira State* (a Muslim ruler) a 'treaty of perpetual alliance and sincere friendship', again with the object of suppressing the Angrias, who had grown more powerful than ever.

For forty years yet the English settlements in India were destined to remain separately administered, each doing what they could in their own area, for their protection and furtherance of interests. This was done often, not only without reference to each other, but occasionally in direct opposition to each other's interests.

The comparative importance of the treaties prior to 1757 should be noted. Calcutta (Fort William) was but a minor factory of no political importance.

* Note: As a matter of interest my eldest maternal aunt, (my mother's eldest sister), was married to the ruler of Janjira in the early 1890s.

Terrorized by the Marhattas and under the threat of Ali Vardi Khan, the Governor, it had no policy but was humbly carrying on its trade. The power of the Peshwas kept Bombay unimportant, from a political point of view for many years to come. Only in Madras, where the quarrels of the Muslim Nawabs — rulers — and the rivalry of the French, gave them a field, the Company's factors connected politically.

The Battalion that I commanded in the World War II in 1944-45 was raised by the Company in 1759 in Madras, to guard their interest pointed out above. It was the first regular troops raised by the Company in India and, therefore, became the oldest and the most senior unit of the British Indian Army. It produced a great soldier like Field Marshal Auckinleck — one of the Ten British greatest of the last century, whose plaque was unveiled by the Queen in St. Pauls Cathedral in 1979 — 220 years after the Ist Battalion of the Ist Punjab (which it eventually became after the reorganization in 1922) was raised and which the Auk had joined in 1904. He sent me there in 1943 from 7th Light Cavalry — another Madras regular unit raised in 1784. They celebrated their bicentenary only the other day at Babina in India. The unit I commanded in war — the oldest — is in Pakistan, stationed in Okara — from where I am writing this particular page — from my farm — Pataudi Farm, Okara, Punjab, the same area where the biggest old Military Dairy Farms are located — next to mine — Arnham, El-Alamin, Tobruk, etc. The village of my farm inherited from my aunt — the Begum of Mamdot — through my mother, her sister — the Begum of Pataudi — there is now a church, the Auckinleck Memorial Church, the foundation of which was laid a couple of days back by the Right Reverend the Bishop of Lahore — a humble contribution from me to this great gentleman, great soldier and a great person — as a prayer place for the few Christians who are living in my village and work on my farm.

The symbolic grave Memorial of the Auk — the Auckinleck Memorial — is in the grounds of Peshawar Cathedral with a replica of his banner of G.C.B. (Knight Grand Cross of the Bath) hanging inside the Church, below it his Coat of Arms — 'as a personal token of admiration and affection from his friend — Sher'.

Another Memorial grave is in the Church in Mardan — which is now the Regimental Centre of his Regiment — the First Punjab Regiment. His banner and Coat of Arms are there also. He wanted to be buried among his men, that has been done — by his friend — me — to whom he had indicated his wish.

I am sorry for this distraction from the subject of treaties of the British with the Princes — I thought these paragraphs above would in some way help to illustrate how eventually their political treaties brought the British and the Natives together and how that association and comradeship developed into the kind of treaty of heart and affection, that I have tried to symbolize — through a church in a village and a grave on Mohmand rock — the rocks which he loved and where he made his name in the Mohmand Operation of 1935 when a Brigadier Alexander, Commander of Nowshera Brigade (later Field Marshal Lord Alexander of Tunis) was with him, under his command.

Time changes — people go — but character, and love and ideas survive, to be a bearer to the coming generations — to guide them on the path to live-and-let-live, of tolerance, of justice, and truth. I yet have to know a stronger force than truth and a more happy society where justice is ensured and practised.

THE PARAMOUNT POWER
(The Beginning)

The Indian rulers with whom the British had to contend with in the critical stage of their intervention were for the most part those who were either associated with or followed the decline of the Moghul Empire, which began with the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The East India Company met no adversary to compare with Akbar the Great, a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth of England, who ruled from 1556 - 1605. Akbar was the grandson of Babar, who laid the first stone of the empire when he overthrew the Delhi Sultan in 1526. Building on his grandfather's foundation, he extended his sway over an area far greater than that ruled by any previous monarch. His character and his ability as an administrator, no less than as a conqueror, have won the admiration of many writers; Akbar, at least partly in an attempt to reconcile his Hindu and Muslim subjects, established a new religion, based on the practices of well-known creeds. Each morning he publicly prayed to

the sun, as representing the divine spirit that permeated the universe, while he himself was worshipped by his people. His religion died with him.

Despite Akbar's success in acquiring new subjects, securing their allegiance and organizing their taxation, there is no reason to believe that even a man of his calibre could have withstood the power of invaders who came from a civilization whose relative rationale and increasing social dynamism were producing superior techniques in every field. Aurangzeb, who ruled from 1658 to 1707, was no insignificant monarch within the context of the Indian subcontinent, but the British had no great difficulty in extracting what they wanted from him. In 1679 the Company was granted a 'Firman' exempting it from all dues, except in Surat. When the Empire's Viceroy in Bengal refused to reorganize the edict, a small British force occupied Calcutta and thus established what became the capital of British India. In 1739 Nadir Kuli Shah, of Persia, the last of the Muslim conquerors of India, swept across Muslim India, sacked Delhi, the Moghul Capital, and carried off booty of enormous value. The invasion dealt the death blow to the empire established by Akbar, to which two important provinces had already ceased paying tribute; while the hereditary succession continued until the Mutiny in 1857; the term Great Moghul became meaningless. Bombay, which was south of Akbar's perimeter, had been in European hands since 1534, when it was ceded to the Portuguese; it became British as part of the dowry received by Charles II when he married the Infant Catherine of Portugal.

The commercial and industrial scene that confronted the European visitor to India in the seventeenth century was, at first sight deceptive. In some respects it was comparable to his own. Gold and silver fabrics, some of them finer than seen elsewhere, aroused his admiration. Carpets, brocades, embroideries, silk and cotton goods, muslins and the cutting and setting of precious stones were all of excellent quality. Indigo was of high standards; ship-building was not negligible. Merchants were wealthy and formed guilds to regulate prices. Some, with branches in various parts of the country, engaged in banking and insurance; bills of exchange had existed since remote times. Indian merchants occasionally financed the East India Company's homeward cargoes. One of these was the merchant prince of Surat, who had a monopoly of pepper, for which he exchanged cotton goods and opium; the Company was obliged to deal with him directly because of his influence. Money changers were so sharp that in the view of one traveller, the Jews of the Ottoman Empire would scarcely have been apprentices among them.

But it was not long before the traveller was struck by significant differences between India and certain European countries. The merchants were devoid of political power, they had no chartered cities, let alone civic militias with which to defend their interests, such as had existed in Europe for hundreds of years. Their sole influence resided in their money, and this collapsed the moment the king chose to call in either his priests or his troops. All high civil offices were combined with the military commands, the people were nowhere represented in any municipal or legislative assembly — there was no bar, bench, senate, corporation, art, science or literature by which men could rise to eminence and power. This grinding military despotism conducted well into the nineteenth century. Merchants were unable to accumulate and concentrate capital in the face of widespread insecurity. State rulers created instability not only intrigues and combinations against the paramount power, which keep alive the dread of internal wars and foreign invasion, but by gangs of robbers and murderers which they foster and locate upon their estates to prey on the more favoured or better governed territories around them. Those with movable property lived in dread of murder.

The barrier to change is a constraint on capital accumulation imposed by despotism, lawlessness and religious obligation, combined with the immobility of labour ordained by the caste system.

On the west coast, where the Moghul grip was less felt, merchants were freer and lived better. But even there the caste system, if not military despotism itself, prevented Hindus from rising in status either by achievement or marriage and they remained at the social level ordained by their birth.

The economic stagnation of pre-British India may be emphasized by recalling some of Europe's industrial achievements from the Middle Ages to the time of the East India Company's intervention. While the Indian artisan lacked tools and was entirely dependent on his exceptional digital skills, Europe had long been profiting from the inquiring and inventive spirit that was to lead, in England, to the Industrial Revolution.

In India the poverty of communications was in itself sufficient to indicate the low level of economic activity. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century it was observed that wheeled carriages could pass along scarcely any roads in any season and along none in all seasons; that was not a single navigable canal and 'only in one line a navigable river'. Farm produce was carried on the backs of bullocks at the rate of six or eight miles a day, adding 100 per cent to the cost of every 100 miles of transport in the best seasons and more than 200 per cent in the worst. Thousands of people died of starvation because food supplies were immobilized. In the absence of machines, sugar was milled in mortars cut in rock by wooden pestles rotated by bullocks.

The ease with which the English and Dutch trading companies established supremacy over warring rulers of a remote sub-continent and subequatorial archipelago indicate that more than mere technical superiority was involved. It was not just that two nations were conquered, but that the world's advanced civilization over-powered. Some say that India would have progressed technologically if its rulers had not been engaged in wars against the British and among themselves. But in Europe wars have often stimulated inventions, the last two being obvious examples. In the seventeenth century the Dutch while constantly at war, both civil and against the Spanish, experienced what is usually called their golden age — in the arts, learning and inventions.

The absence at that time of similar movement in India is explained directly and totally by the Indian's preoccupation with the supernatural, at best through refined concepts of the Divine and a worst, and for the most part, through the 'brutalizing worship of nature' according to Marx. The other-worldliness if Hinduism precluded any material investigation that could bring about systematic advance in technology. The mind was not directed to unravelling the mysteries of nature by hypothesis and experiment, but devising ritual subservience to it. Certainly there was much philosophy, but what it amounted to was ingenious attempts to rationalize the imponderable. European rationality and irrationality co-existed and still does, in a kind of harmonious schizophrenia.

The Hindus believed that the miracles in their own myths were superior to those of the miracles in the New Testament. Similarly, orthodox Indian Muslims believed that Moses was sixty yards high and carried a mace sixty yards long; the Hindus not only failed to question beliefs, but refused to hear them questioned and embarked fanciful rationalization the moment any doubt was raised. Consequently they remained ignorant of the discoveries of science until long after their first contacts with Europeans.

Muslims were amused by Hindu superstitions, but had plenty of their own. The mentality and knowledge of educated Indian Muslims in the first half of the nine-

teenth century will not be needed by those familiar with the period, they serve to emphasize aspects of the intellectual stagnation that prevented socio-economic development. There were few communities in the world among which education was more generally diffused than the Muslims of India. A minor official commonly gave his sons an education equal to that of a prime minister. After seven years of study a young man could talk as fluently as a graduate raw from Oxford about Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, of whom he learned through the medium of Arabic and Persian. He was learned in Arab works, which 'hardly yield to those of Plato and Aristotle', on the faculties and operations of the human mind, on man's passions and affections, and his duties in all relations of life'.

Humphrey Trevelyan in his book *The India We Left* (Charles Trevelyan 1826 - 65, Humphrey Trevelyan 1929 - 57, Macmillan) has quoted:

> "A most curious product of the Indian bureaucracy, nothing in all white babudom is so wonderful as the political agent. A near relation of the Empress some three or four years ago said that he would rather get a political agent with Raja, chuprassies and everything complete, to take home than the unfigured 'mum' of Baluchistan. But the political agent cannot be taken home. The purple bloom fades in the scornful climate of England; the paralytic swagger passes into sheer imbecility; the thirteen gun tall talk reverberates in jeering echoes; the chuprassies are only so many black men and the Raja is felt to be a joke. The political agent cannot live beyond Aden."

The most famous and oldest of the Hindu dynasty was the house of Mewar (Udaipur). For a Rajput the most desirable match for his daughter was the heir to Udaipur. The prize was secured by the famous and formidable figure, the Maharaja of Bikaner, a dominant force in princely politics, host to the aristocracy of Europe for the imperial sand grouse shoots in this State. He visited Udaipur during winter, taking the precaution of perching into a bowl of oil with copper coins in it, for luck before going out shooting. Another leading Rajput Ruler came to ask the Maharana's opinion before marrying a lady from outside Rajputana. The Maharana replied: 'Whom you marry is your affair, not mine; but if the Political Department should ask me whether the son of the marriage should be treated as in the line of succession, I shall say no.' The little Maharana, in spite of his crippling disability which prevented him from taking any part in affairs outside his own State, retained unimpaired the position which he had inherited as head of the Rajput clans and used it with humanity and justice.

When the Indian Empire was in the making, the East India Company's policy on annexation of territory varied from time to time and from place to place in accordance with the practical requirements of each situation as it arose, with the temperament of the man on the spot and with the political and financial climate at home. Conquests came to the British empire. There were not nearly enough British administrators to look after the vast area which was coming under British control. There was no permanent or deep-rooted organization for the British to recognize. They confirmed the situation which they found as they advanced and so stabilized a chance moment in a period of rapid change. As a result, the territories of many States were inextricably mixed up with each other and with British India, and a map of the States in a political agency often looked like an ink-splash on the wall.

The Moghul Nizam in Hyderabad remained completely independent for only thirty-six years. Hyderabad, a predominantly Hindu State with a Muslim Ruler remained under the protection of the British. Kashmir was held by a series of Afghan dynasties until the Sikhs gained control. After the First War in 1846, it was

sold by them to a relation of the old Hindu Ruler, the part of whose State lay in the Indian plains. So a Hindu Ruler became the ruler of a predominantly Muslim State. That produced its own problems a hundred years later.

With the defeat of Tippu Sultan at Seringapattam in 1799, the old Hindu dynasty of Mysore was restored to power. After thirty years it was taken under British administration, with the excuse of rebellion against the Ruler.

The States in their new form were, in a sense, a British creation. They were a reserve of Indian India, with the British patrolling outside the gates.

The men who carried out the policy of pacification in the States seem to have expected criticism and so presented their system of practical expediency as a doctrine which they called 'indirect rule'. While Sir John Malcolm was engaged in pacifying Central India, he admitted in his letter written between 1817 and 1821 that the Indian Governments were considered to be intolerably bad, but even if this were true, the contrast of their government with ours would strengthen us. If we made all India into British districts, the dislike of being ruled, common to all men, and the exclusion of Indians from all positions of rank and consequence, which must be the result of our establishing our direct authority, would ensure that our empire would not last fifty years.

Malcolm understood the realities of the power situation better than some British Governments, since his days. Malcolm feared that the British in India would destroy themselves by grabbing too much. Territory was coming too fast upon them. He argued that they could maintain their power in India so long as they kept their naval superiority in Europe, if they had wisdom enough, which he doubted not to destroy themselves by their Indian policy. If that policy required that they should govern a considerable part of India through the Indian Princes, they should use all their influences and power to strengthen these 'royal instruments of rules'. Nor should they be diverted from this policy by any considerations of improvement of the States' administration.

Malcolm's policy was thus revived in a more extreme form than even he had contemplated. Henceforth, the British did their best to avoid interfering in the States' internal administration. Rajas became Maharajas, new titles were granted, and the Rulers of the smaller states were elevated from their subordinate status to more important position. The official manual required the political officer to avoid interference unless 'misrule reaches a pitch which violates the elementary laws of civilization.' The political officers were prevented by this new policy from ensuring a reasonable standard of administration. The States and British India were getting mixed up.

Paramountcy was paramountcy and could not be defined, and the economic problems were a tough nut for somebody else to crack. The Princes had their trade union, the Chamber of Princes, invented by the British, like the Indian Congress, but it was ineffective. The princes' interests were too disparate. The political movement in British India did not leave the States untouched. The politically conscious Rulers realized that they must try to put their house in order, political officers were instructed to advise more often. But this action was irrelevant to the political issue and mutual suspicions between princes and politicians increased. The Congress Party was not going to leave the States outside its control.

The Rulers hoped to defend their positions by emphasizing that their constitutional relationship was not with British India, but with the Crown, thus keeping British India at arm's length. This theory was the basis of the formal separation of the Political Department from the Government of India, the creation of a Crown Department under the Viceroy as Crown Representative to be responsible for the

conduct of relations between the Crown and the Rulers. It was a last effort to swim against the tide.

The scheme was not totally acceptable by the Princes and they argued about the financial provisions affecting them and pressed for constitutional safeguards against the invasion of their rights by British India. It was interned on 3 September 1939 with an uneasy peace. But even if they had accepted it, they would never have succeeded in remaining isolated from British India.

The fact was that the British had made sure that the Princes were not able to challenge the British power and this position was inherited by the successors of the British in the Government of India. The boundaries of the States lay open on all sides; the States were widely scattered over the whole country. In brief, they had not got the power to stand alone and no one else was going to challenge the Government of India on their behalf, least of all the British who were leaving India on terms of friendship, with the inheritors of their power.

The majority of the States were so small and backward that they did not deserve further existence. Moreover, the States' boundaries cut across linguistic and ethnic divisions and it was clear before independence that the new Indian federation would be composed of linguistic units with the States broken up to fit into the new pattern. It was evident that, if the princes held out against any form of fusion, they would be forced into it. It was not a betrayal of old pledges to recognize the facts and to urge the Rulers to compromise in their own interests.

The British Government was accused of betraying them when it withdrew the protection of the Crown, which could not be given by any Power not in control of the Government of India. All the efforts of distinguished British lawyers on behalf of the Nizam of Hyderabad were shown to have been irrelevant. He resisted and was duly mopped up. A few princes held titular office for a time as governors of federal units without political power. Many began to take an active part in Indian politics, generally in opposition to the Congress, but their efforts did not suffice to preserve the privileges which had been guaranteed under the constitution. Most public opinion was against them. However, they had a greater opportunity to take a real part in the life of their country than they ever had in the old, securely fenced reserve of 'Indian India'. And then, for better or for worse, the political landscape of India was reduced to a dead level plain. Much that was bad had gone, but reformers never pause to think whether what they put in place of the old will be better. With the disappearance of the princes for all their faults, something had gone which had its roots in the life of India. They became an Elite Minority, suspected by the political pundits and used by 'officers', under the pretence of seeking their guidance and leadership.

THE PARAMOUNT POWER
(The Guardians)

Certain areas of Indian social, political and economic life were not touched by the activities of the British Raj. Whether the policies of the Raj had the effects their authors intended is out of place. What matters is that the Raj was there. Sooner or later, any man wishing to make his mark in the world had to come to terms with it. This being so, one should be looking not at the rulers and the ruled in isolation, but rather as inter-dependent segments of a single interlocking system. It had been and will be made abundantly clear that one cannot talk about social and political

developments in the States without at least a passing reference to the system of indirect rule which linked them to the government of British India — the 'Paramount Power' in contemporary jargon.

The Indian princes, unlike the ordinary citizens in British India, did not have to contend with the inhibiting effects of imperial legislation and the 'rule of law'; but they did have to answer to the Raj in general terms for the standard of their administrations and for the behaviour of their subjects. The men of the Indian Political Service, posted to the 'native' courts as Residents and Political Agents, were supposed to keep their superiors at headquarters informed about what was happening in the States. When corrective measures were called for, it was the job of the Political Service to see that they were carried out. Generally, the wishes of the Paramount Power were conveyed to the rulers informally in the shape of 'advice', but no one who knew the way the system operated was fooled by this euphemism. The Political Agent might be deceived or cajoled, but he was rarely disobeyed.

To understand how the political system of princely India worked, we should know about the body of men who constituted the Political Service. Where did they come from? What ideas and aspirations motivated them? What constraints, if any, were put upon their freedom of action by the peculiar conditions under which they laboured? How did they compare, man for man, with their colleagues in the other services? How good were the officers of the Political Service? How were they rated — though rarely in public, of course — by their contemporaries? And how did their efficiency, their ideas and their policies affect the denouncement of princely rule?

It would probably be fair to say that no other branch of government during the life of the Indian empire was more consistently maligned than the Political Service. The widely-reported comments of the Prince of Wales concerning the 'rudeness' of the Bombay government's political officers during his Indian tour of 1875 were taken up the following year by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton: 'I am at present far from satisfied (with the performance of the Foreign Department).... Many circumstances in the recent history of.... relations (with states) induce me to fear that the average calibre of our Political Officers has deteriorated, and is deteriorating.' Viscount Cross, Secretary of State for India from 1886-92, shared the Viceroy's concern:

> "The terms of the Queen's Proclamation are almost inconsistent with the interference which we are obliged to practise in the internal administration of the Native States, and we want the best men to carry out this most difficult work... We have not got them."

The Political Service by the 1930's appeared in a very bad shape. Intellectual calibre was never regarded as an exclusive test of a man's ability to succeed in India. Particularly in the political field, recruits were expected to possess not only brains, but drive, resourcefulness, tact, discretion and integrity. Merely to categorize the performance of the cadre by reference to its intellectual attainments is not enough. It is essential that we grasp how the service functioned, what its strengths and weaknesses were, and whether it was properly equipped to handle the large demands that were put upon it.

Bearing this in mind, I have sought to evaluate the performance of the Indian Political Service from a number of differing perspectives: the nature of political work; selection criteria; recruit motivation; and, ideology and morale. The points that emerge are:

a. that the Political Service was recruited with the fallacious idea that it was a diplomatic service, whereas its work was actually much more diverse;

b. that many politicians joined for the wrong reasons, or with inflated expectations of the service as a career;
c. that the overwhelmingly conservative bent of the service prevented it from meeting the challenge of political change in the 1930's and 1940's;
d. that many military members of the Political cadre were thoroughly demoralized by the Department's anomalous promotional structure; and,
e. that the efficiency of the service generally suffered from technological and policy changes which undermined the authority and independence of the political agencies and prevented them from making a positive contribution even to the implementation of 'feudatory' policy.

What was it like to be a Political Agent?

The typical political officer, Philip Mason tells us, was one who, exiled in the 'steamy idleness of a small State' had little else to do but wait for the raja to commit enough indiscretions to justify his removal. Mason's picture contains a germ of truth. Isolation — and its corollary, boredom — was one of the hazards that faced the political officer. Most of the agencies were located in regions well-removed from the ports and the big cities, and European companionship was likely to be scarce.

It is also true that there was little drama in the average Political Agent's existence. Incidents such as the celebrated poisoning attempt on the life of Colonel Phayre in Baroda in 1874, the uprising in Manipur in 1891, and the killing of Major Bazalgette in Orissa in 1939 were few and far between. Political work was normally as much a matter of steady routine work. And it was just as demanding.

Political Agents were busy people. In a report on civil salaries compiled for the Government of India in 1859, Commissioner J. D. Ricketts concluded that the Kathiawar Agency was 'the most difficult and responsible office he had met within the non-regulation provinces.' Admittedly Kathiawar was somewhat unusual because of the large number of small States attached to it. But the same general point could have been made about any one of the large agencies in Bombay, Rajputana, or Central India. Let it be remembered, too, that the principal agencies and residences carried salaries of the order in the late nineteenth century of Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000 per month — putting them at par with the command of a division in British India. The parsimonious Government of India did not pay such money to enable Political Agents to sit on their backsides.

In a single-state agency, such as Baroda or Mysore the Political Agent might attend the palace upto twice daily for talks with durbari officials and, occasionally, with the Chief himself. In a multi-state agency, (such as Eastern Rajputana, Bundelkhand, or Rewa Kantha, his personal visits were likely to be less frequent: weekly, monthly, or perhaps even annually in the case of really tiny out of the way twentieth century increasingly by telephone. One of the Political Agent's more time-consuming occupation was dictating and answering letters and telegrams. If political work was sometimes boring it was the office chores that made it so. The politicians were caught up in the bureaucratic revolution which was a feature of nineteenth century Indian Government.

Political Agents were discouraged from closeting themselves in their cutcherries. They were the eyes and ears of the Raj, as regards the States, and as such they were expected to find out for themselves what was happening — not only in the palace or in the State capital but also throughout the length and breadth of the State, and this required extensive touring.

Successful Political Agents were those who, between the ordinary chores of managing an office, found time to make friends among the leading personages of the State, to cultivate sources of inside information, and to master a wealth of

details about the past history, foibles and private aspirations of the ruling dynasty. An afternoon game of tennis on the palace court, a week's shikar in the raja's private jungle — such a diversion might be written off by the uninitiated as casual relaxation, but there was usually a solid political purpose behind it.

Influence was not an attribute that could be acquired overnight. Months or even years might be spent building up the right contacts and becoming familiar with the customs and prejudices of the people. Length of tenure, therefore, could have an important bearing on a Political Agent's performance. Too frequent shifting of Political Agents from place to place, useful though it may have been in giving them a wide experience of different situations, usually had a deleterious effect on the influence exerted by the government in the states concerned. In view of the admitted connection between political influence and the length of a political officer's tenure, it is surprising to find that the shifting of Political Agents became more frequent as time went by. The reason for this apparent paradox was the government's fear — confirmed by costly experience — that too long an exposure to the problem and personalities of one state or region might encourage an unhealthy spirit of partisanship among the officers concerned. After all, what was more natural than for a political officer, closely acquainted with a particular state's needs and aspirations, to support that state in disputes with other states of which he had no intimate knowledge? Major Meek, Political Agent for the Mahi Kangha, was honest enough to recognize the temptation:

> "In trying to estimate the true position in the States, it should be remembered that Political Officers themselves are prone to support their own Princes. In many appointments in the Political Department officers enjoy the society of the Princes, and comforts and amenities which in their view take away from defects in administration."

A Political Agent posted to a large agency comprising many small states had, generally speaking, a much tougher assignment than one appointed to a single-state agency or residency. Not only were there more durbars, and consequently Durbaris to be won over, but there was the sheer physical problem of getting around such a large area, especially in the type of terrain commonly encountered in Central India and Orissa where many of the smaller states were located.

The Agent for the Deccan States reported on a visit to Miraj Senior: 'the Resident is not asked to visit public institutions, and sees little of the town as he is housed in the guest house some distance away; nor is he ever invited to the Palace.

In 1922 the Resident at Hyderabad, Lieutenant-Colonel Knox, was repeatedly refused an interview with the Nizam. He appealed to Simla for assistance. However, after looking closely into the rights of the case the Political Secretary reluctantly concluded there was little that government could do: 'If a prince chooses to bury himself in his palace, the Political Agent cannot dig him out, and however tactful and untiring he may be in his efforts to cultivate friendly relations, his efforts will not always be crowned with success.

The Political Agent did not stand or fall by his own efforts alone. The average political agency was a fairly substantial undertaking, employing perhaps half a dozen European and Indian assistants and an even larger office staff. Leaving aside the European assistants, whose slim chances of reaching the top of their profession depended on their earning good reports from their superior, the role of the Indian subordinates was clearly a crucial one. The key-man in the native estab-

lishment was the daftardar* or seristadar,* who doubled as the Political Agent's confidential adviser and foreman over the other Indian staff.

The problem was compounded by a concentration of certain castes in the administrative hierarchy: Chitapavan and Desastha Brahmins in the Deccan, Nagar Brahmins in Kathiawar. Kinship linkages between office-holders in the agencies and landholders or officials inside the states opened the door to widespread graft and intrigue and hampered the efforts of the British authorities to pin down and prosecute those responsible.

In Kathiawar corruption was so rife that the *Times of India* remarked: 'the Nagars are the real political agents and our officers but puppets in their hands.' It is probable that by the 1860's the heyday of the overmighty subordinate had already passed, though corruption was not eliminated overnight. By the end of the century the problem was less one of graft than of 'sedition'. Eliminating Brahmins, however, meant finding similarly qualified men of other castes to take their place; thus debrahminization could only be followed through at the risk of lowering the already indifferent standards of education among the subordinate employees of the agencies; and that even rabid Brahminophobes were unwilling to stomach.

Just as the states differed greatly in size, population, and style of administration from one another, so there were various kinds of agencies which put differing demands on their incumbents. At Baroda the Resident's brief was to 'watch and control events' but not to interfere in the local administration of the country; whereas in Kathiawar the Political Agent's power of supervision and direction was more frequently called into play.

Although the men appointed to the administration of such states were not always political officers — or at least Europeans ones — the chances of a Political Agent at some stage of his career taking direct charge of a stage were still high. Between 1884 and 1911, twenty-four Bombay political officers (sixteen military men and eight civilians) spent a grand total of approximately 474 months on 'foreign service' as administrators of states — a task for which the army men, at any rate, had had no special preparation.

Even in the nineteenth century political work was generally as much administrative as diplomatic; and this became more pronounced as time moved on. Yet the Indian Political Service was recruited as if its job was exclusively one of caring for fractious rajas. The fact that until very late a military officer predominated over civilians was itself an apt reflection of the government's priorities. Military recruitment was justified on many grounds. It was said that the chiefs 'looked up to' men of rank. The real reason, however, was that military men cost less than civilians. Not surprisingly, political officers were often criticized for their intellectual mediocrity.

Except for the civilians who worked for three years in the revenue line before joining the service, political officers received no special administrative or judicial training. Armed only with a bevy of manuals, grammars, and legal texts, they were thrust into the field to learn their trade by experience. By the twentieth century there was a ground swell of dissatisfaction with existing procedures of recruitment and training, but reform — whether due to official complacency or to a lack of alternative avenues of recruitment — was slow in coming. During his term as Foreign Secretary, Harcourt Butler tried to dissolve the Department's prejudice against 'book-learning' and intellectual prowess in general by emphasizing the importance of clear, comprehensive reporting as part of a political officer's duties. But his efforts were to no avail: 'It is in the routine of business that the Political

* Registrar.

Department is weakest', he regretfully confided to his successor. Later, others urged a complete reconstitution of the political cadre on the grounds that most of its members were incapable of dealing with the kinds of economic and constitutional problem which the states in the 1930's and 1940's were beginning to experience. The point was subsequently taken up by the Viceroy, Linlithgow, in correspondence with the Secretary of State. But the war intervened before the Viceroy's initiative could be brought to fruition.

Given the government's prejudice against using civilians in political posts and their preference for athletic attainments over learning skills, it is not surprising that the Indian Political Service became a byword for intellectual mediocrity. The problem, however, went deeper. Even by its own standards the Political Service failed to attract enough men from the I.C.S., and more importantly, from the Staff Corps of the Indian Army. In 1902 the Political Secretary was forced to appoint the Assistant Collector of Belgaum to a vacant residentship in the Southern Marhatta Country, there being no political officer available. 'The Political Department', he confessed, 'had simply come to the end of its tether.'

If lack of incentives deterred the best men from joining the Political Service, others joined out of pure expediency. Some were driven to political work because it offered them an outlet from the 'drudgery of regimental routine.' For others financial reasons were paramount. Recruits to the Political Department holding the Army rank of lieutenant received an immediate increase in salary, making it possible for them to marry. Finally, there was the dubious and most illusory attraction of the 'diplomatic life'; an eternal round of palace festivities, shikar expeditions, and ostentatious ritual.

Despite the admitted failure of the traditional avenues of recruitment to provide an adequate supply of good men to the Political Service, the government refused to consider the obvious alternative — recruitment from among the 'natives' of India. As late as 1938 only seven Indians had been admitted to the ranks of the I.P.S., all since 1919. Of this selected band, only two eventually went on to take charge of a political agency.

Government doggedly defended its discrimination against the employment of Indians on the grounds that the princes preferred dealing with Europeans, and that Indians lacked the energy and resolve which political work demanded. As the Resident at Aden brusquely observed in reply to the Bombay government's tentative suggestion that an Indian deputy assistant might by temporarily entrusted with the duties of Political Agent at Perim: 'A native in such a position would rapidly become a cipher.' The Government's refusal to admit Indians in any numbers represented not only an act of foolish discrimination, but also a monumental waste of talent. In early 1939 I was selected to command the Muscat Levies. The first Indian to a Colonial Post. I had started my Arabic learning in earnest from an instructor from Hyderabad when World War II sent me off to the Staff College, Quetta, and beyond in N.E.F.A. and Burma.

Summarily, it would appear that the Government of India got the Political Service it deserved. Prejudice against intellectual ability, emphasis on physical prowess, financial parsimony, and a lack of basic training in administrative skills, combined to produce a service dominated by upright but slow-thinking and extremely unimaginative officers. This might not have mattered so much if the states themselves had remained backward and unsophisticated. But by the twentieth century many of the durbars were capable of contending with the government's men on their own terms. With the advent of chiefs' conferences, and still later the Chamber of Princes, the durbar had a further opportunity to go on the offensive against the raj, and a number — led by the middle-sized states such as

Patiala, Bikaner and Bhopal — did so. Thell efforts culminated in the Standing Committee's briefing in 1927 of Sir Leslie Scott, the eminent barrister, to put the Princes' case against the 'doctrine of paramountcy.' This new brand of counter-diplomacy put the dexterity of the Political Service to the test. More and more it was found wanting.

Considerations of individual ability do not alone explain why the Political Service failed to keep pace with the changing circumstances of political life in the states. The outlook of the Political Service was generally very conservative, if anything even more so than the I.C.S. which itself was scarcely a byword for liberalism. The politicians, like the Indian Civil Servants, came from predominantly upper middle-class backgrounds, were educated mainly at public schools and came to India via Oxford or Cambridge, or in the case of army men, from Sandhurst. Moreover, just as it might be argued that Indian service generally offered a spiritual refuge to people alienated by the pace of political change in their own country, so, particularly in the twentieth century, service in the states held out a special allurement to those disturbed by the growing spectacle of a pleader's raj. Indeed, as the seeds of constitutional advance took root in British India official opinion began to take a hard look at what the states had to offer. Many, sceptical about the applicability of British ideas of democracy to Indian conditions, saw in the government of the rajas a system more in consonance with the traditions and prejudices of the country. Harcourt Butler, Political Secretary under Lord Minto, in his 'handing-over' note of 15 November, 1910 opined that:

> "... we have much to learn from Native States. The indigenous system of government is a loose despotic system tempered by corruption, which does not press hard on the daily lives of the people.... Our system is a scientific system which presses steadily on the people in their lives... and through its hordes of subordinates makes itself everywhere felt. The advancing Native States generally adopt our methods because it is easier to get good men trained in our school.... But he would be a brave man who said that our system was always the better, and my own belief is that we shall see some reaction of ideas."

In that, Butler was mistaken; nevertheless, his grand vision of the states as a counterweight to 'democracy' in the provinces dominated the thinking of the Political Department until well into the 1930's. Sir William Barton, the eminent Resident at Hyderabad, wrote in 1927, that the standpoint of Indian politics generally. It would be a steadying element in times of political flux... It would be a bulwark of British prestige and influence, the preservation of which will not be an easy matter even in an only partially self-governing India.' Lieutenant-Colonel David Field, was of like mind: 'If the Rulers of the states wish to stand aloof from the democratic experiment in British India, I say, let them... I need hardly point that in British India we have received small thanks for our efforts in the cause of democracy.'

The Home Government's support for a scheme of an all-India federation in 1930 brought the Department's conservative bias into clear focus. Whitehall welcomed the participation of the princes because they believed, like Sir Terence Keyes, Barton's successor at Hyderabad, that they would be able to dominate the proceedings of the all-India legislature. However, the Government of India and the Political Department in particular, were sceptical. B. J. Glancy, the then Deputy Secretary, supported the doubts of his colleagues when he observed in 1927 that 'in any form of Parliament common to democratic India and themselves... the votes of the Princes would be of little avail.' By 1932 the Department's hostility to federation had hardened into open revolt. Senior governmental spokesmen from the

Viceroy downwards issued private warnings to the chiefs against coming into the scheme, while in public reassuring Whitehall of their efforts to promote it. In a meeting with Willingdon in March 1932, the M.P. John Davidson, noted bitterly: 'The fact is, of course, that the Political Department... has been heartily opposed to Federation and... have had a very hostile influence amongst the Princes.' Whether this influence proved decisive it is difficult to say. Sources within the Department had been adamant that the blame lay elsewhere, and it would be foolish to ignore, amongst other things, the backstairs encouragement which the princes received from elements in the British Conservative Party intent on sabotaging the larger scheme of constitutional advance. What is clear, however, is that the Political Service did not, until very late, push the idea of federation very actively in conversation with their charges. Had they done so, the denouncement of 1939 might well have been avoided, though whether this would have made any difference to the final outcome, beyond postponing it a few years, is open to doubt. The Indian Political Service must bear a large measure of responsibility, for it was the Political Department's permissive policy of laissez-faire towards the states after 1909 which enabled the princes to shut their eyes to what was happening in British India.

If one had to nominate a single, overriding cause for the indifferent performance of the political cadre, it would seem to be in the realm of morale. All the evidence suggests that morale amongst the rank and file of the Indian Political Service was low. In the nineteenth century the main reason was probably career frustration. Young military officers entered the Department with high hopes of rising to the top of their profession with all the social prestige and economic rewards that this entailed; more often than not they were disappointed.

Embittered by long-standing grievances over pay and promotion, the rank and file of the Political Service retained little faith in the good intentions of the Secretariat. With the Finance Department which controlled the purse-strings, and with the politicians at Whitehall who made the rules showed little acumen in their handling of the problem, and indeed revealed by their actions that they failed to appreciate the depth of feeling which existed in the service, especially among the junior officers.

The establishment of a time-scale system of remuneration for the Indian Political Service in 1911, and for the Bombay Political Service in 1913, did much to restore the flagging morale of the military cadre. Nevertheless, certain grievances remained. The new time-scale still left the military cadre in an inferior position to the civilian members of the service. Nor did the military men stand much chance of reaching the top of their profession. Increasingly, the biggest residencies and top secretariat jobs went to civilians, who were evidently reckoned to be better equipped to handle the heavy responsibilities which such offices involved.

The same argument did not apply to the Foreign Office of the Government of India which was essentially self-contained. But there again, not all the secretaries were political specialists. Harcourt Butler came to the Foreign Department in 1909 directly from Oudh. B. J. Glancy, who held the reins of the Department during 1930's, was from the Punjab.

Political Secretaries were chosen by patronage. In the nineteenth century personal influence may well have counted for something in the way patronage was exercised; but by the twentieth century it is safe to say that the political officers who made it to the top did so exclusively on the basis of merit.

The weakness of the Secretariat officials, like that of the cadre at large, was that they were too blinkered in their attitude to groups and forces outside the states; too ready to defend the princes against their 'enemies' Arthur Lothian, Courtney Latimer, Kenneth Fitze, Conrad Corfield, Wingate, Glancy and Wylie — the leading

Secretariat figures during the last decades of British paramountcy — would have made their mark anywhere, for they were men of outstanding ability. The selection of Wylie for the Central Provinces and Glancy for the Punjab is testimony enough of that. But Corfield's promotion designed to groom him for the Political Advisership was a near disaster for the orderly withdrawal of British paramountcy.

A senior official in the India Office wrote in 1830: 'In modern conditions it must be rare for the local officers to make even informal suggestions on matters of importance without authority from headquarters for doing so.

From 1909 until the 1930's the feudatory policy of the Government of India was dominated by two interrelated ideas:

a. that the states had an important destiny to fulfil in Indian politics as allies of the raj; and,
b. that in order to win the friendship of the princes it would be necessary to concede to their demands for greater autonomy in the administration of their internal affairs. The 'laissez-faire policy' as it became known, was the brainchild of two men — Lord Minto and his Political Secretary, Harcourt Butler the distinguished administrator of Oudh, who later nearly became the Prime Minister and ended up as Chancellor of Oxford University as Lord Butler.

The effect of these measures on the prestige and authority of the political officer was disastrous. According to the Political Department Manual by Butler during his term as Secretary, the government would henceforth 'prefer to take no overt measures for enforcing reform' in the states, except where 'misrule reaches a pitch which violates the elementary laws of civilization.' With this extraordinary brief at his elbow what was there for the political officer to do but spend his time 'sitting in his Residency and listening to bazaar, or club gossip?' Kenneth Fitze voiced the deep frustration felt by most of his colleagues when he told the Political Secretary: 'If... the policy of non-intervention is to be finally reaffirmed, the process of the degeneration of the Political Officer into a mere Post Office will rapidly continue and the functions of Political Agents might just well be carried on by their Head Clerks.'

Criticism of the laissez-faire policy by the rank and file of the service mounted steadily during the latter part of the 1920's. The Secretariat, however, remained wedded to Butlerian orthodoxy until the mid-1930's. The policy of non-intervention, Wingate in a secret note of August 1934 argued, had not fulfilled expectations. Far from establishing themselves as centres of stability in the subcontinent the states had relapsed into obscurity, and in one or two cases, into barbarism.

Non-intervention emasculated the political officers by taking from them their principal raison d'etre — that of advisers in matters of internal administration. But the philosophy had other side effects which were equally deleterious to the man on the spot. Under the old dispensation the princes were kept at arm's length, isolated both from government and from each other. The Butler policy by contrast laid great stress on consultation between government and the princes, a practice begun during the war years of 1914-18 and given formal shape in 1921 with the establishment of the Chamber of Princes at Delhi. For the first time leading chiefs could take their problems straight to headquarters instead of having to go through their Political Agent and local Agent to the Governor-General. John Davidson was not alone in believing that the Chamber of Princes had 'completely short-circuited' the regular machinery of the Political Department. According to J. Fitzpatrick, the Agent to the Governor-General for the Punjab States, the princes participated in the proceedings of the Chamber because they saw in them the means to eliminate 'not only the local political officer but the Political Department as a whole.' With diplomatic activity centered more and more at headquarters, the need for an elab-

orate system of locally-based agencies largely disappeared. While the Simla authorities consistently rejected the princes' demands for a strictly legal interpretation of paramountcy, a large measure of concurrence was achieved as regards the circumstances in which imperial intervention was appropriate. Agreements such as those of October 1920, and September 1932, which laid down formal procedures for the resolution of disputes between the states and the Crown involving reference to ad hoc tribunals of princes, made further inroads into the steadily shrinking jurisdiction of the local political officer. It is a fair indication of the morale of the Department that Davidson could declare to Hoare in 1932 that the senior Residents had no confidence in their superiors, and that Sir Terence Keyes, the Resident at Hyderabad, could talk of 'the rottenness of the Political Department.'

The traditional picture of the British raj in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had been that of a superlative army of administrators united in the single goal of governing a subcontinent: men with solid loyalties and high ideals; trifle unsympathetic, perhaps, but nevertheless remarkably efficient by comparison with colonials elsewhere.

The Political Service did, as a matter of fact, pride itself on its high standards and on the large demands which it was accustomed to make upon its members. But this self-image bore little resemblance to reality. Behind its glittering facade of pomp and efficiency the raj hid its doubts, its shortcomings, and its weaknesses.

THE PARAMOUNT POWER
(The Let-Down)

The Princes felt a terrible 'let down' by the Paramount Power, the Crown, whose representative was the Viceroy, in 1947. It is, therefore, essential to understand how the rulers stood with the Paramount Power with regard to their own States, in more detail than it has been possible to describe in the chapter on Historical Background.

First let me briefly fly over the important subject of the Evolution of Political relationship between the British Government and the Indian States. From there we will proceed to the development of relationship between the Princes and the Paramount Power as we understand in 1947.

The first Governor-General appointed under the Regulating Act was Warren Hastings. It was in his time that the foundation of the British Political System in India was laid. The political position in India on Hastings' arrival in Bengal was as follows:

In Bengal, the Company was on the verge of financial ruin, the repair of which had been the main reason for the appointment of Hastings by the Board of Directors. Its chief fear was a dread of Marhatta raids, which might further impoverish a country already ruined by famine and misrule.

Shah Alam, the Moghul Emperor, who had been living at Allahabad on the revenues assigned to him by Clive in 1765, has solicited the help of the Marhattas, and by them had been replaced on his unhappy throne at Delhi in 1711. Under cover of his name, the Marhattas were each year not merely overrunning, but seizing fresh districts, and — a point that closely concerned the Company — were demanding the surrender of the districts of Kora and Allahabad which bordered not merely on Oudh, but on Bengal as well. The Company had no wish to have such turbulent neighbours at its doors.

The Punjab at this time, except for its south-eastern tracts, where the Marhattas were making yearly inroads, may be said not to have come within the orbit of Indian Political History. The Sikhs were rapidly forming into a nation, and their growing strength, together with dynastic disputes in Persia and Afghanistan, prevented the Muslim rulers of these latter countries from emulating the exploits of Nadir Shah.

Sind and the Western States of Rajputana, by their remoteness, were still secure from the Marhatta scourge, but less fortunate were the Eastern Rajput States, on which Scindia and Holkar imposed a vague suzerainty.

In the centre of India the Bhosla, Scindia and Holkar had already rough-hewn their separate principalities. In the west the Gaekwar was already proving remiss in forwarding tribute to the Peshwa at Poona, as were Scindia, Holkar and Bhosla. Nevertheless the Company's Government at Bombay still considered the Peshwa as a Power in the land by whose acquiescence they held Salsette and Bassein, which had been wrested from the 'Portugals'.

Despite their mutual jealousies, the Marhatta States, in combination, constituted the strongest power in the land. Though the controlling power of the confederacy had become less effective as a result of the battle of Panipat, there was still sufficient feeling of national solidarity left in the leaders, pride of common achievement among the Marhatta people, and sufficient prestige with the Peshwa, to render such a combination possible at any moment of crisis. The mutual jealousies of the leaders prevented the partition of the Nizam's territories, as the army chiefs could not agree on a division of the spoils. As it was, the Nizam's State was forced to pay *chauth* (one-fourth of the revenue) with a greater regularity than any part of the Peninsula.

In the south the Nawab of the Carnatic had fallen into a position of powerless dependency on the Company owing to the rise of Haider Ali. Haider Ali had consolidated his power in the ancient kingdom of Mysore, whose Hindu rulers he still pretended to serve. He had attacked and devastated the whole of the Carnatic, dictating a disastrous peace to the British Company at the very gates of Madras. He nursed a strong resentment against the Company for their refusal to help him against the Marhattas when he was pressed by the Poona Government.

Thanks partly to its geographical position, but still more to the strength of the Marhattas on the western ghats, Bombay at this period of its history controlled very little territory. As yet it had not by conquest or cession acquired wide dominions as Madras and Bengal had done, and for this reason was considered by the Board of Directors as the most satisfactory of its factories, since by its pacific policy it had incurred the least debt of any of the three Presidencies.

Such, was the position of affairs in India when Warren Hastings, assumed control of the Company's fortunes. At this time the dominion in India lay between the Company and the Marhattas. In spite of opposition and difficulties, Hastings enforced on the three Presidencies a joint policy. By their disruptive jealousies the Marhatta Chiefs threw away their chance of succeeding to the Empire of the Moghul. The breakdown of the Imperial Administration of the Moghuls following the invasion of Nadir Shah had made vast provinces, (where new administrations had not come into being), the happy ground of desperate adventurers of every race and sect. Bands of fanatics called sanassies, 'the Gypsies of India', had devastated Bengal repeatedly. Hastings, by vigorous military operations, expelled them from its borders and then relieved the State of Cooch Behar from the grasp of the Bhooteas. These hardy mountaineers from Bhutan defended the fort of Cooch Behar desperately, but after it had been stormed, were driven out of the district. The treaty of Cooch Behar (1773) is not one of alliance, but is an admission of

subjection, though the extent to which the sovereignty of that 'State' may be held to have lapsed is a question not finally solved. The treaty with Bhutan was one of peace. Whatever be the position of Bhutan it is not that of an ordinary Indian State.

Having restored order in Bengal, Warren Hastings turned his attention to other affairs. The British in India then held a very different position with regard to the Indian rulers from that which they were to occupy at the close of Hastings' administration. They were locked on with jealousy and suspicion by all, by none with respect. Bound by treaty to pay tribute to the Great Moghul, they had made over to him for this support the Provinces of Kora and Allahabad. But after his return to Delhi in 1771, he had become a mere tool in the hand of the Marhatta, to whom he had been forced to cede those Provinces. To a sovereign who could afford the British frontier no protection, Hastings determined to pay no more tribute. The Provinces of Kora and Allahabad were given back to the Vazier of Oudh from whom Clive had taken them.

The definition of the Ring-Fence System, as well as its object, has clearly been laid down by Hastings. By the Ring-Fence System the Company's authorities meant that instead of defending their own frontier, they undertook to defend the further frontier of their immediate neighbour — of course at his expense. In this case the Company's possessions in Bengal could be attached only by the Marhattas and the Afghans. In both cases Oudh stood as a buffer state. The Ring-Fence System meant, as Hastings expressed it, the security of the Vazier's frontiers being considered as the security of those of the Company. The Ring-Fence System was thus based on the policy of extending British authority without enlarging the line of direct defence.

Undoubtedly Hastings was more clear-sighted than the majority of his contemporaries in the matter of the relations that might be established between the Company and the States of India.

In the third period of the administration of Hastings were concluded the first treaty with the Rana of Gohud, now (Dholpur) 1779, 'a treaty of perpetual friendship', and the first treaty with Gwalior (1781), a treaty of 'peace and firm alliance'. This latter engagement helped the termination of the Marhatta war and the conclusion of the treaty of Salbai (1782).

Sir A. Lyall in his book *British Dominion in India* has given an excellent summary of the wars with the Marhattas and with Haider Ali, with pertinent references to the part played by the French directly or indirectly in these struggles. The summer of 1780 was the nadir of the English fortunes in India. By 1783 when the Peace of Versailles was signed, the Company was at least in a desperate straits as it had ever been. This is the only period in Indian history when a demonstration of France against the English dominion in India has failed to accelerate the expansion of that dominion. It is the only period when Britain lost, even partially, her command of the seas.

If the growth of British power in India is to be measured by the expansion of its territories, the two decades between Clive's acceptance of the Diwani (1765) and the departure of Hastings from India (1785) may be reckoned as a stationary period. And yet in an imperceptible manner the Company's authority had increased to an extent which put it in the forefront of Indian Powers. It had been able to withstand the opposition of the most formidable Indian rulers leagued together for its destruction, to carry on warfare continuously for over nine years on many different fronts, to raise, equip and maintain armies which traversed the plains of India, and in spite of all to emerge without financial bankruptcy or political discredit. The only State which had advanced in credit during the same period

was that of Scindia. All others had, during this interval, become weaker and less able to undertake offensive operations. The Company's power increased by comparison, and its political and military prestige stood high. The fight for existence which Hastings undertook ended by a complete vindication of the right of the Company to be considered one of the major Powers of India. The Company was by no means supreme, nor were their military resources or political strength, as yet adequate to challenge the Marhatta Empire, for supremacy in the Peninsula. But it was clear that this power was shareable. Hastings had consolidated their position in such a way as to render a gradual advance not only possible but inevitable.

The Company still adhered to the policy of the Ring-Fence System, which policy, if we except Wellesley's treatment of Mysore, was not abandoned until, in 1813, the Marquis of Hastings, then Lord Moira, became Governor-General. The certain failure of this policy in the future was not yet obvious to the Company owing to the indirect service done to the English by the rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab to fill the political vacuum caused there by the final disintegration of the Moghul Empire and the withdrawal of the Afghans from Northern India generally. It would not be out of place to quote Lyall on this matter.

> "The fierce enmity of the Sikhs kept out the foreign Mohammedan and prevented the resuscitation of any fresh Islamite dynasty upon the ruins of the old empire at Delhi or Lahore."

By 1785 the Sikhs had mastered the whole country between the Jhelum and the Sutlej, were threatening the Mohammedan provinces about Delhi, and had made pillaging excursions eastwards across the Ganges into Rohilkhand.

In England, Indian affairs had been arousing increased attention in Parliament. The provisions of the Act of 1773 had proved inadequate, and in 1783 Fox had introduced an India Bill which had been thrown out in the House of Lords only by the personal influence of King George III. The India Bill introduced by Pitt the following year was a compromise.

Hastings considered the policy laid down in the Act to be a censure on his administration and decided to leave India as soon as possible. He wrote a note which sums up the position of the British in India at the time of his departure.

> 'And whereas to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India, are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and policy of this nation; be it therefore further enacted, that it shall not be lawful for the Governor-General and Council, without the express commands of the Court of Directors or of the Secret Committee, in any case (except where hostilities have actually been commenced or preparations actually made for the commencement of hostilities against the British Nation in India, or against some of the Princes or States whose territories the Company shall be engaged by any subsisting treaty to defend or guarantee) either to declare war or commence hostilities, or entering into any treaty for making war, against any of the country, Princes or States in India, or any treaty for guaranteeing the possessions of any country, princes or states... and in all cases where hostilities shall be commenced or treaty made, the Governor-General and Council shall, by the most expeditious means they can devise, communicate the same unto the Court of Directors, together with a full statement of the information upon which they shall have commenced such hostilities, or made such treaties, and their motives and reasons for the same at large.'

Lord Cornwallis, who was specially selected and sent to India to carry out this policy, was a statesman who, by virtue of his exalted rank and his previous experience an officer of the Crown, was well-fitted to pursue a steady line of action without being unduly worried by the criticism of the Court of Directors or by the jealousy of the Company's servants in India. Moreover, he firmly believed that the policy laid down in the Act was the correct one. The object of the Act, which Pitt had declared to be 'to prevent the Government of Bengal from being too ambitious', seemed to Cornwallis a most laudable one.

It was the successor of Cornwallis, the Marquis of Wellesley (or Lord Morington, as he was then styled) who really 'conquered' India — he did not approve the policies of Cornwallis as he proposed, years later, in a letter to Lord Ellenborough "how vain and idle was poor old Cornwallis reliance on the good faith of Tippu, and on the strength to be derived from treaties with the Marhattas or the Nizam." He was influenced by a chance meeting with Major Kirkpatrick, who had been Resident at the Nizam's Court. In a long letter written to Mr. Dundas, President of the Board of Control, and dated Cape of Good Hope, 23 February 1798 Wellesley gives an interesting account of the different troops under the command of French officers at Hyderabad, and makes various suggestions dealing with a situation which, owing to the State of affairs in Europe, was undoubtedly fraught with danger to the British in India. Even if Wellesley was occasionally too prone to suspect French intrigue where one existed, there is no doubt that "the formidable Corps d'Armee of fourteen thousand sepoys under French officers that was maintained by the Nizam" formed a good nucleus round which might gather the French adventurers in Scindia's and other Marhatta armies, as well as those with Tippu.

Since 1793 England had been engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the French Republic, and the idea behind almost every action of Wellesley was to checkmate the real or possible machinations of France.

In the month of April, 1798 on the very day on which the Marquis Wellesley landed at Madras on his way to Calcutta, at Mangalore, on the west coast of India, there disembarked some ambassadors whom Tippu had sent to the Isle of France (Mauritius). They brought with them a rather shabby collection of volunteers and a promise from the French Governor that his Republic would soon entertain with pleasure Tippu's offer of 'alliance and amity'. It helped to counteract the depression he had felt at the retirement of Zaman Shah of Afghanistan. That ruler, in the previous year, had invaded the Punjab, and occupied Lahore, but owing to a Persian attack on his own western provinces, had been forced to withdraw, much to the relief of the Bengal Government. Tippu now redoubled his efforts to unite the Marhattas and the Nizam against the English, but met with comparatively little success. The Marhatta confederation still suspected the ruler of Mysore, and the Nizam, though furious at the refusal of the British assistance at Karala, had grown to fear the French Corps at his capital almost as much as the Marhattas who had temporarily reduced him to a stage of vassalage.

The first step necessary in this direction was to remove the French control over the Nizam's forces, which might, in case of a war Tippu, develop at any time into a serious menace. Wellesley therefore entered into an alliance with Hyderabad — the first Subsidiary Alliance, as we now know it — by which the Nizam was forced to disband the French battalions and to agree to receive a force commanded by English officers to be stationed permanently in his territory. This treaty was unlike the former agreements negotiated by the East India Company, and an analysis of its principles is necessary for an understanding of the subsidiary system. The treaty with the Nizam and most of the treaties made by Wellesley are, however, based on a wholly different policy. The object of the treaty was to restrict the Nizam's free-

dom of action, and, as Wellesley himself put it, 'to place the States in such a degree of dependence as to deprive them of the means of prosecuting any measure hazardous to the security of the British Empire.'

On the same principle, it was also laid down that the ruler should have no external relations.

An alliance of a similar nature was offered to the Peshwa, but the Poona Court refused to walk into Wellesley's parlour.

But though the Peshwa had refused a subsidiary force, he, like the Nizam, agreed to join the English against the ruler of Mysore, Tippu Sultan. Accordingly in 1799, with the Madras army now fully organized, Mysore was attacked. Tippu in vain looked for help from the French. Soon driven into the fortress of Seringapattam, he met his death when that stronghold was stormed. The short-lived Muslim dynasty of Mysore came to an abrupt end. The kingdom which lay at the mercy of the allies was broken up, each receiving a share, while the remainder was made into the modern principality of Mysore and given to a scion of the old Hindu family which had been expelled by Haider Ali. Very stringent conditions were imposed on the Maharaja by the new treaty.

In his dealings with Oudh, as in his dealings with the Carnatic, Lord Wellesley did not set great store by treaties and obligations. By pressure, the treaty of 1801 was forced upon the ruler of Oudh. In 1799 the Nawab Vazier had proposed to abdicate, and Wellesley was not unmindful of the opportunity such a step offered to force Oudh to accept new conditions. Writing to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors (28 November 1799), the Governor-General observed with commendable frankness:

> "Whatever may be the motives or whatever shall be the ultimate decision of His Excellency on this occasion, it is my intention to profit by the event to the utmost practical extent, and I entertain the confident hope of being able either to establish, with the consent of the Vazier, the sole and exclusive authority of the Company within the Province of Oudh and its dependencies or at least to place our interests in that quarter on an improved and durable foundation."

The Vazier, however, refused to abdicate, though the price of continuing to reign in Oudh was his acceptance of a new treaty which reduced that State to a position of absolute vassalage. Wellesley forced the Vazier to surrender a considerable portion of his territory. The principle on which the subsidy was to be commuted was on the basis of the Hyderabad precedent.

Since the humiliation the Nizam had to face at Kurdla, he had been desperately afraid of the Marhattas. He now was promised by Wellesley relief from the exaction of *chauth* by them. It is interesting to note that almost after 150 years in 1947 he received another humiliation which finished him off completely. This proves that unless the ruler had a firm base in his principality of his own co-religionists, the only thing that kept him there was the force of arms and guarantee by the Paramount Power.

Since Hyderabad had been reduced to helplessness and the power of Tippu extinguished, only the Marhatta States remained to be dealt with. Wellesley offered the Peshwa a subsidiary alliance, and he made no secret of his views that as the Peshwa was the acknowledged head of the Marhatta Confederacy, the acceptance by him of a subsidiary alliance would be held binding on the other Marhatta Chiefs. The Peshwa had originally, on the advice of Scindia, Holkar and other princes, refused the alliance offered. But when Scindia withdrew to the north, the Peshwa signed the treaty of Bassein and accepted a subsidiary force, for the maintenance of which he ceded territories. Wellesley had now rounded off his system.

Of the five important Indian Powers outside the Punjab, the Marhattas, the Nizam, the Sultan of Mysore, the Nawab of Carnatic and Vazier of Oudh, he had conquered Mysore, annexed the Carnatic, extinguished the military power of Oudh, reduced the Nizam from an independent Power to a dependent ally, and finally, by the treaty of Bassein, attempted to convert the Marhattas into a subordinate confederacy. The treaty of Bassein was naturally enough repudiated by the Marhatta leaders, and the war that followed, though it broke up the power of the Peshwa, did not establish British authority over Scindia, Holkar or the Bhosla rulers of Nagpur.

Wellesley was not successful in bringing the whole Marhatta Empire under British control, but he could still claim with justification that the political system of subsidiary alliance was mainly of his creation.

Wellesley did not conceal his purpose of acquiring for the Company imperial paramountcy in India. In a speech to the European inhabitants of Calcutta on the eve of his departure he stated: "My public duty is discharged to the satisfaction of my conscience by the prosperous establishment of a system of policy which promises to improve the general condition of the people of India and unite the principal Native States in the bond of peace under the British Power." If he was not wholly successful in this, in spite of the victories of his younger brother Arthur Wellesley, (later the famous Duke of Wellington), it was because the Marhatta rulers were still strong enough to resist direct encroachments on their sovereignty.

The process of expelling Scindia's soldiers from the Eastern Punjab, however, brought the Company into touch with the Cis-Sutlej Sikh States, and prepared the way for the admission of these Powers, six years later, into the general system.

Wellesley was recalled in August 1805, and Lord Cornwallis was appointed in his place. He was sent out to liquidate the grandiose scheme which Wellesley had undertaken, 'which annually calls for reinforcements of men and for remittances of money, and which yields little other profits except brilliant Gazettes'. But before he could undertake the work of pacification and settlement Cornwallis died.

Sir George Barlow, who succeeded Cornwallis, did not press the offer to Scindia to accept the subsidiary alliance, and that left the ruler completely independent.

The Rajput States and the Central Indian rulers were left to be dealt with by Holkar and Scindia as they chose, following the policy of leaving the independent states alone (known as the period of non-intervention), did not meet with the approval of the Company's political officers in India.

Lord Minto, the next Governor-General, came out to India in 1807 with instructions to follow the same policy as that inaugurated by Lord Cornwallis. But, though Lord Minto would have been quite content to devote all his energies to the work of organizing the new provinces acquired for the Company by Lord Wellesley, he could not entirely avoid war. He had to intervene in Travancore, to support the ruler of that State against his rebellious subjects. He was also compelled by circumstances to take under the military protection of the Company the powerful Sikh misls (clans) on the eastern side of the Sutlej, thus creating a barrier to the expansion of the newly-founded Lahore State under Ranjit Singh.

Although, with Wellesley, the policy of the subsidiary alliance came into existence in all its essential features, and although from that time — the early years of the nineteenth century — the practice of active intervention in internal affairs restriction of sovereign powers. forced appointment of ministers and control of succession began to take shape, and although the problems incidental to paramountcy began to agitate Anglo-Indian Statesmen, it must not be thought that a political system embracing the whole of India had been brought into being at that time. The treaties with Scindia left him a sovereign Power whose

independence was acknowledged up to 1833. The treaty with Holkar in 1806 was also not of a kind which reduced him to the position of a subordinate ally.

Lord Moira (later the Marquis of Hastings), who succeeded Lord Minto in 1813, was a different type of statesman. With Wellesley and Dalhousie he shares the claim of having followed a consistent, if often aggressive, policy towards the Indian States.

It seemed that the work of any Governor-General lay merely in improving the condition of the British Provinces. The sketch below shows the main event of Marquis of Hastings rule:

1. The War with Nepal (1814-16)
2. The Defeat of Holkar's Army at Mehidipur (1818)
3. The Operations against the Pindharis (1814-17)
4. The Outbreaks at Poona and Nagpur (1817)
5. The surrender and deposition of the Peshwa in 1818 and the creation of the State of Satara.

After the last Marhatta war the Peshwa was deposed and the Poona State annexed. Thus the central circle and unity of Marhatta Confederacy finally disappeared. The Raja of Nagpur was mulched of a large portion of his territory, and a treaty was forced upon Scindia (1817) with a view to rendering him incapable of offensive action.

The suppression of the Pindharis and its aftermath, the final Marhatta war, not only led to the destruction of the Marhatta Confederacy, they resulted in the establishment of a protectorate over the States of Rajputana and certain principalities in Central India from which the Marhattas had claimed the right to levy tribute.

Lord Hasting's policy with regard to the Indian States deserves special attention, because it was during this time that the Simla States — the numerous sovereignties on the lower ranges of the Himalayas — were taken under the Company's protection, Central India was pacified, and the Rajputana Agency came into existence. He 'established the State of Satara with sovereignty sufficient for the maintenance of the family in comfort and dignity', a charitable, if strange, principle of sovereignty which is met with in no other case in India. Most of the treaties he entered into contained a clause establishing 'subordinate co-operation' a phrase new in Indian political language, between the British Government and the allied States.

Though Lord Hastings was in favour of the extension of subordinate alliance, yet he was firm against the principle of intervention in the internal affairs of these rulers.

Lord Hasting's policy of non-intervention differed materially from the previous policy of so-called non-intervention followed by Cornwallis and others. His policy of non-intervention was that the external policy of the States was of vital importance to the Company, but that the rulers in subordinate alliance retained absolute independence in internal matters, and should not be interfered with.

The only incident of Lord Amherst's period of government (1823-28) may be mentioned in his relations with the Bharatpur State. The story of the capture of Bharatpur, the fortress which in 1805 had baffled Lord Lake, and of the seizure of the State treasures and jewels in the citadel and their immediate distribution among the attacking force, is well-known. But it would not be unfair to quote Sir Charles Metcalfe, who wrote:

> "Our plundering here has been very disgraceful and has tarnished our well-earned honours. Until I can get rid of the prize agents, I cannot establish the sovereignty of the young Raja whom we came professedly to protect, but have been plundering to the last *lotah* (water pot) since he fell into our hands."

Early in 1828 Lord Amherst retired, and was succeeded by Lord William Bentinck. In 1833 Lord William became, on the renewal of the Company's charter, the Governor-General of India in place of Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal. With the Indian States he had few dealings, and his policy would seem to have been to leave the States to look after their own affairs without intervention from outside. Only in Mysore, where the original treaty gave the right of taking over the administration in case of misrule, did the Govenor-General intervene forcibly. Mysore was put under British administrators, and for half a century it was held in fact, though not in name, as a British Province.

By Lord William Bentinck, fully occupied with his reforms in British India, the doctrine of absolute non-intervention towards the Indian States was strictly enforced. Thus at Gwalior in 1833, according to Aitchison, the British Government declared it was 'a matter of indifference whether the Maharaja or the Bai (Baiza Bai) was at the head of the Gwalior State, and that the only object of Government was to preserve the general tranquillity and its own reputation, recognizing such ruler as might be placed by the popular voice at the head of the administration.'

Beyond question up to this period Gwalior was in fact a State independent of the East India Company and was so treated by it. Gwalior is also mentioned along with Nepal, Lahore and Sind as not under British protection, its relations with the Company being merely those of amity and friendship. The same policy was followed in Indore, whose ruler had also been declared in the treaty to be absolute over his subjects.

Outwardly the Indian Princes were treated with great personal respect. No one questioned their sovereignty; some of them besides the King of Oudh were addressed as 'Majesties'; 'Royal', salutes were fired in honour of their accessions to their thrones. But in practice they were rois faineants — Princelings — possessed of little power, and any attempts by them at organizing their states into compact political entities were looked upon with the utmost suspicion. With a policy which was designed to enfeeble their administration and indirectly to teach their subjects to look to the Company as their master and not to themselves, it is no wonder that the progress of the States was slow.

In tracing the relationship of the Indian States with British India the administration of Sir Charles Metcalfe (1835-36) and of Lord Auckland (1836-42) call for little comment. The former was definitely opposed to interference in the affairs of the States. He was opposed also to Bentinck's forward policy to counteract real or imaginary Russian designs on India.

The blighting effects of the subsidiary system which Lord Cornwallis had noticed when he wrote in 1805 to Lord Lake that: "From reports I have received from the Residents, I am sorry to find that the States which are most intimately connected with us are reduced to the most forlorn condition; that these States possess no funds or troops on which they can depend; that anarchy and disaffection prevail universally throughout their domain", became more and more evident.

The Rajputana States, which had been relieved of the vexatious supremacy of the Marhattas, but the rebellious and unruly Thakurs (nobles) defied the ruler and set at naught his authority. That they had recovered from this almost complete breakdown was due to the energy, ability and farsightedness of a new school of statesmen represented by Salar Jang of Hyderabad, Dinkar Rao of Gwalior, Sankurni Menon of Travancore, and Madhav Rao of Indore, who laid, truly and well, the foundations of modern administration in Indian States.

The disasters in Afghanistan brought about the retirement of Lord Auckland and the appointment of Lord Ellenborough (1842-44), who had been President of the Board of Control. The new Governor-General succeeded to some extent in re-

establishing British prestige in Afghanistan and proceeded to annex Sind. The annexation of Sind was an act of gross injustice, as Sir Charles Napier, in his classical pun, 'peccavi' had communicated his achievement. Lord Ellenborough had for some time been actually contemplating what action to take against Gwalior, and on what pretext to annex it. That the measures of coercion later employed towards Gwalior, nominally as a punishment for the resistance offered by its troops to the British Army, had been contemplated before there was any idea that there would be any fighting, is shown by Lord Ellenborough's own letters to the Queen:

> "The late Maharaja of Gwalior had allotted certain revenues for the maintenance of a corps of about 140 men, to be commanded by British officers, and constantly stationed in Gwalior territory. This corps had done excellent service and it is proposed to obtain from the Gwalior State the assignment of further revenues for the purpose of raising very considerably the amount of this useful force."

Again in a letter to the Duke of Wellington before there was any likelihood of any fighting with the Gwalior troops, he writes:

> "I am acting upon your treaty of Boorhanpore, carrying into effect the spirit of that treaty by rescuing the person and the Government of the Maharaja from the real subjection in which both are to the army... I shall carry into effect, too, Lord Wellesley's as to the future relations of Scindia with our Government, which would have been entirely defeated had we permitted this really unfriendly Government, with an overgrown and mutinous army, to exist at Gwalior."

Gwalior was not annexed, and that his aggression on Sind had already made him unpopular with the Cabinet in London. Sir Henry Hardinge, his successor, was his own brother-in-law. The new Governor-General was a soldier of ability and one who did not hesitate to serve under his own Commander-in-Chief. At the end of the war Raja Ghulab Singh of Jammu was recognized as the ruler of Kashmir (treaty of 1846). The treaty with the Sikhs (1846) recognized Mandi and other Trans-Sutlej States. Sind by its engagement (1847) received a grant of new territory, while in the following year the chiefship of Shahpur in Rajputana was taken under British protection.

Lord Dalhousie, a remarkable and masterful personality, stands in relation to Indian States and to British India on the same eminence as Warren Hastings, Wellesley and the Marquis of Hastings. His Governor-Generalship in India is marked by the annexation of the Punjab, Oudh and Nagpur, as well as of those States to which his famous 'policy of lapse' was applied.

When General Fraser, Resident in Hyderabad, suggested that the Government of India should intervene to set affairs right in the Nizams's dominion, Lord Dalhousie wrote:

> "I desire to record my entire dissent from, and disapproval of, the policy which the Resident has suggested for the adoption of the Government of India. For more than half a century relations of amity and intimate connection have existed between the British Government and the Nizam, and they have been strengthened on both sides by the stipulations of formal treaties.
>
> "I refuse to entertain them because we acknowledge the Nizam as an independent Prince.... The British Government therefore cannot honestly entertain, and has never entertained, any intention of open aggression on the independence of this Prince...."

The corollary in Dalhousie's mind to the impossibility of interference so long as a State continued to exist was to abolish the State; hence his radical remedy of

ruthless annexation, which he applied to old-established kingdoms like Oudh and Berar, and whenever his policy of escheat and lapse found an opening. As a result he left India a cauldron of discontent which boiled over in the Mutiny. What saved the British Empire in India was the ready help rendered by the Princes of Northern India, and the wise policy pursued by Salar Jang in Hyderabad.

In theory the position of the Indian States underwent no change as a result of the Mutiny. The transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown did not, and could not, affect the treaty position of the States. This was made amply clear in the Act of 1858 and in the Proclamation of Queen Victoria.

Lord Canning had arrived in Calcutta fully convinced of the wisdom of Dalhousie's policy of 'escheatment,' was one of the first to recant this view.

The issue of the Sanads by Lord Canning to some extent relieved the feeling which had been heightened by his declarations in 1860, that the Government of India was not debarred from intervening in the affairs of a State under certain conditions.

For the first few years after the Mutiny, the Government of India was too busy restoring order after the chaos caused by the rebellion and in setting right the disrupted finances of the Provinces to have much time to pay attention to the States.

The general attitude of the Princes after the Mutiny was one of relief except in those exceptional cases where they felt they had been unjustly treated.

Holkar no doubt felt aggrieved that, owing to the personal animosity of Sir Henry Durand, his right to recognition of his services during the Mutiny had not been conceded despite its admission by Sir Robert Hamilton in open Durbar: Nizam was sore that only the Raichur Doab and not Berar had been given back to him but as a whole, the Princes felt that the era of insecurity had gone.

If upper India was devastated by famine, the cotton districts were flourishing, thanks to the outbreak of the Civil War in America. Alike with British India, the States should have been able to look forward to an age of great development.

In 1862 Lord Canning retired and was succeeded by Lord Elgin. He spent his first year in Calcutta attending to official matters and the improvement of official routine: next year he died at Dharmasala. His influence on the policy of British Government in regard to Indian States was therefore negligible. His published letters, however, show how strongly he was impressed with the necessity of avoiding undue interference in the States.

It is possible that the abandonment of the annexationist principle of Dalhousie was regretted by a section of the Government of India, which had only decided to tolerate the States because they could not abolish them. For example, in 1868, speaking in the House of Commons, Mr. Samuel Laing, who had recently retired from the Finance Membership of the Viceroy's Council, said:

> "The existence of the Native States in India, except as far as it was based on treaty and sanctioned by the allowing of hereditary possessions, was doubtful policy either for British interests or for the welfare of the inhabitants of British India. If we looked at the past conditions of the Punjab and Oudh, and other districts which had been recently annexed, and compared it with their present conditions, we should see how much the people themselves had benefited by the change of Government."

Sir John Lawrence was appointed to succeed Lord Elgin in response to public opinion in England. The appointment of an Anglo-Indian official was a departure from precedent, but Sir John Lawrence's great services were considered a suffi-

cient justification for such a change. A contemporary and admirer of Lord Lawrence, writes:

> "This was the more tragic in that originally an annexationist (and able to point with just pride to the bright side of annexation in his model Province, the loyal and prosperous Punjab), his zeal now tempered by the shock of the great revolt, which had fallen on no one with more astonishment that on him.... At all his Durbars, Lawrence used to harangue the chiefs, assembled out of all corners of medieval barbarism, on the evils of infanticide and the blessings of female education."

Lord Lawrence viewed with suspicion the forces maintained by certain States despite the fact that the number maintained did not violate treaty stipulations. In a letter, he ordered that 'Scindia's little army should at once be broken up, the several corps dispersed about the country, and that no such large assemblage of troops should again take place', the politeness of this letter did not conceal the peremptory nature, all because of his background and association with the horrors of the Mutiny.

It was during the period of Lawrence's Viceroyalty and largely under his encouragement that Mr. Aitchison (Later Sir Charles) compiled the first edition of that extensive work which is supposed to contain all the treaties of any importance made between the British Government and the Indian States, prefixed in the case of each State by a narrative giving a resume of its history. He is the man who laid the foundation stone of Chiefs' Aitchison College, Lahore.

Lord Lawrence was succeeded by the Earl of Mayo, chosen for the post by Disraeli; Mr. Gladstone, the new Premier, did not interfere with the appointment, and so early in 1869, the new Viceroy took over the responsibilities of his office, trusted by both the political parties in Parliament. Lord Mayo was the man after whom the Chiefs College for the Chiefs of Rajputana in Ajmere is named.

Lord Mayo was deeply interested in the relationship of Indian States with the Crown. He toured constantly and held great Durbars and addressed the Princes on their duties and rights. In his great Durbar in Rajputana he said to the assembled Princes:

> "Be just and merciful to your people. We do not ask whether you come to us with full hands, about whether you come with clean hands. No presents that you can bring will buy the British favour. No display which you make will raise your dignity in our eyes; no cringing or flattery will gain my friendship; we estimate you not by the splendour of your offerings to us; not by the pomp of your retinue here, but by your conduct to your own people at home.
>
> "If we respect your rights and privileges, you should also respect the rights and regard the privileges of those who are placed beneath your care. We demand that everywhere throughout the length and breadth of Rajputana, justice and order shall prevail; that every man's property shall be secure; that the traveller shall come and go in safety; that the cultivator shall enjoy the fruits of his labour...."

For it was the Princes of Rajputana who were his audience and there is, in most of the treaties made with the States of Rajputana a clear and unequivocal declaration that the British Government shall have no manner of concern whatsoever with the internal administration of the States, and that within their territories the rulers 'shall be absolute'.

This treaty of interference on the basis of Paramountcy manifested itself in a number of ways. The claim put forward that the appointment of a Diwan (Prime

Minister) by a Prince should be subject to the approval of the Government of India. According to Aithchison's narrative, in the case of Baroda during Lord Lawrence's Viceroyalty in 1867, "the Government of India waived their right to have formally submitted for sanction any appointment which the Gaekwar might wish to make to the post of Diwan of his State. They retained, however, the right to veto any nomination of which they might disapprove."

In Hyderabad Salar Jang who had proved so good a friend to the British in Mutiny days, still remained at the head of the administration, as he was destined to do until his death in 1883. Though in 1869 the Nizam was succeeded by a three year old child Salar Jang, from a loyal jealousy for the rights of Hyderabad, succeeded in preventing the sovereignty of his master from being unduly infringed.

Certainly during the Viceroyalty of Lord Mayo interference in the internal affairs of the Indian States became more frequent, due in part to Lord Mayo's idiosyncrasy for systematizing things. Lord Mayo was not content with the idea that Princes in possession of their powers should govern their dominions well: he wanted to ensure that the younger generation which would grow up to rule should be educated for its responsibilities, and to him is due the foundation of the Rajkumar College, at Rajkot for the education of the Chiefs of Kathiawar and other States then under the supervision of the Bombay Government. His Viceroyalty is to be dated the construction of the metre-gauge line which was 'to connect the great salt lake of Rajputana with the chief marts of Hindustan.' This was the result of the acquisition by lease in 1870 of the Sambhar Lake. The Chiefs College in Ajmere was named after him — founded in 1875.

Lord Mayo was succeeded by Lord Northbrook in 1872. He was the first Liberal Under-Secretary for India during the Palmerston Ministry. He had followed Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax), to the Admiralty and later had left the India Office for the War Office. As a whole the idea of a Liberal peer as Viceroy did not commend itself to official circles in India.

Despite Lord Mayo's geniality of manner, the States already felt that they were distrusted. In a confidential dispatch, Lord Napier of Magdala, the Commander-in-Chief, wrote to the Home Government, which gives a clear picture of his views on Indian States:

> "Our whole experience in India should warn us that we cannot always depend upon tranquillity; that disturbances arise where they are least expected; and when they commence at one point, unless immediately checked, they are sure to be followed by others.
>
> "There are considerable forces under Native Chiefs, who may be individually friendly, but whose troops can never be relied on not to join against us.
>
> "Our military force at Gwalior is much inferior in strength to that which Scindia could bring against it, and nothing but the possession of the fort could justify our position at Morat, even with the garrison originally appointed for it.
>
> "We know that Holkar has foundry and makes good guns for his own amusement. We do not know how many may be made in other places, but we may be certain that guns will not be wanting whenever there are people to use them."

At the time Lord Northbrook reached India, few members of the Government would have accepted the truth of Lord Canning's words:

> "Should the day come when India shall be threatened by an external enemy, or when the interest of England elsewhere may require that her Eastern Empire shall incur more than ordinary risk, one of our

best mainstays will be found in these Native States. But to make them so we must treat their Chiefs with consideration and generosity, teaching them that in spite of all suspicions to the contrary their independence is safe, that we are not waiting for plausible opportunity to convert their country into British territory.'

In his farewell speech at Southampton, Lord Northbrook had given the following sentiments:

"I hope I have learnt one great lesson which I shall carry with me to India — that is, the difference between the Eastern and Western Civilization and the danger of being carried away by the ideas that what may be right and politic and wise in this country must be the same for a people with different sentiments, different religions and a different education, different tone of thought from ourselves. That lesson at any rate I hope to carry with me to India."

From the point of view of the States, the incident for which Lord Northbrook is most remembered is 'the trial' and deposition of Malhar Rao, the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda in 1875. The Gaekwar was accused of having tried to poison the Resident, and for this he was ordered to be tried by a tribunal consisting of two Indian Princes, two Ministers and three high officers appointed by the Government of India. The legal authority of this tribunal and of its proceedings must not be assumed. The step was not justified by any treaty agreement not had it the sanction even of previous practice. Baroda was a state in treaty alliance with the British Government. As Tupper himself says, the action was taken apart from treaty obligations. The objections to the validity of the procedure adopted were plain from the beginning, and ther realization probably accounts for the fact that under the orders of the Conservative Government which had just succeeded Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, the Gaekwar was deposed not for any action of which he had been accused, but on general grounds of maladministration.

The proceedings in connection with the Gaekwar's case aroused distrust in many of the States, and the feeling was only partially allayed by the gracious demeanour of the Prince of Wales, who shortly afterwards visited India. A shrewd observer of men and affairs, His Royal Highness, in a letter to the Queen in November 1875, commented on the attitude adopted by Political Officers towards the rulers of the States to which they were accredited. His Royal Highness wrote:

"What struck me most forcibly was the rude and rough manner with which the English Political Officers (as they are called who are in attendance on native chiefs) treat them. It is indeed much to be deplored and the system is, I am sure, quite wrong."

Disagreeing with the Home Government on a matter of the foreign policy to be followed by his administration, Lord Northbrook in 1876 resigned the Vieroyalty.

Lord Lytton held a Durbar at Delhi in 1877 to announce publicly the new title assumed by the Queen. Lord Hartington described it in the House of Commons as 'the assumption of the fallen estate of the Moghuls'. The Princes and rulers were invited to attend and do homage to the representatives of the Queen Empress. Orders of chivalry were conferred on them, and their precedence interwise was settled. This Delhi Assembly of 1877 was a great success, and so in April Lord Lytton is found writing to Disraeli:

"Nothing has struck me more in my intercourse thus far with Indian Rajas and Maharajas than the importance they attach to their family pedigrees and ancestral records. Here is a great feudal aristocracy which we cannot get rid of, which we are anxious to conciliate and command, but which we have as yet done next to nothing to rally

round the British Crown as its feudal head. Every Raja I have yet conversed with has been curiously and amusingly anxious to convince me of the antiquity of his family and the extent to which its importance has been recognized by the Suzerain Power at various times.... But what is worthy of notice is that in all of them I find evidence that small favours and marks of honour bestowed by the British Government on the head of the family are quite as highly prized and appreciated as the more substantial benefits conferred in earlier times upon their family by Aurangzeb or Akbar."

Had Lord Lytton been allowed his way he would have established orders of Indian nobility and an Indian Privy Council. The first proposal came to nothing; the second was whittled down into the empty title of 'Councilor to the Empress'. This was the period in which India was particularly 'fertile of administrators, barren of statesmen'.

The Marquis of Ripon who succeeded Lord Lytton as Viceroy came out with direct orders to reverse the foreign policy of his immediate predecessor as well as certain internal regulations like the Vernacular Publications Act. Perhaps no Viceroy has ever lived up to the political theories of his party in the way in which Lord Ripon did. The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon is memorable in the history of the relationship of the States with the Government of India for the return of the great State of Mysore with its 30,000 square miles and population of 5,860,000 to the direct administration and control of its ruler, a measure carried through by the joint agreement of Lord Ripon and Lord Hartington, the Secretary of State for India at the time. In 1881, after half a century Mysore was given back to the control of its Prince.

The Government of India was doubtless aware of the uneasiness that had been created by the trial of the Gaekwar. It was true that Baroda had not been annexed, but only its ruler punished; yet Holkar's dictum to Sir H. Daly, 'The person for the time-being is little; the State with its rights is the point for consideration', did not express the whole of what the Indian Princes thought about the Baroda case.

The restoration of ruling powers to the Maharaja of Mysore was an important event. The fact of rendition appealed strongly to all the princes. 'Now that annexation is at an end', commented Scindia, 'we breathe freely even when our failings are approved and our shortcomings discussed.' The Maharaja had just been given a salute of twenty-one guns, and the State was therefore, on the same level of importance with the greatest States in India.

Section 22 of the Instrument of Transfer gives us a clear picture of the motives of the Paramount Power:

"The Maharaja of Mysore shall at all times conform to such advice as the Governor-General in Council may offer him with a view to the management of his finances, the settlement and collection of his revenues, the imposition of taxes, the administration of justice, the extension of commerce, the encouragement of trade, agriculture and industry, and any other objects connected with the advancement of His Highness's interests, the happiness of his subjects, and his relations with the British Government."

The Instrument of Transfer concludes thus:

"This document shall supersede all other documents by which the position of the British Government with reference to the said territories has been formally recorded. And if any question arises as to whether any of the above conditions have been faithfully performed, or as to whether any person is entitled to succeed, or is fit to succeed to the

administration of the said territories, the decision thereon of the Governor-General in Council shall be final."

States like Baroda, Gwalior, Udaipur, Alwar, Nawanagar or Tripurs existed already as full powered States when they first accepted British Paramountcy. Their sovereignty was their own, not granted to them by the British. Indeed they were the donors and the Crown the donee. For Paramountcy was created by their cession of certain sovereign rights to the Crown.

Lord Dufferin had served his apprenticeship at the India Office as an Under-Secretary in the days of Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax). For years he had devoted his talents to diplomacy, and incidentally had gained an insight into Eastern problems. Mr. Gladstone considered him a suitable person to hold the Viceroyalty at a moment when negotiations with Russia were in progress. When he reached India in 1884 he was nearing sixty. Despite his years he proved a very able Governor-General.

Soon after he assumed charge of his great office, the Penjdeh incident of 1885, on the far northern frontier in the Pamirs, nearly brought England and Russia to war. Throughout his Viceroyalty Russian affairs occupied a very large part of Lord Dufferin's attention; indeed even in the important dealings which he had with the Indian States, he could never forget Russia.

The effect of this preoccupation of his mind was mainly felt in Kashmir. The State had been hitherto outside the Indian political system. A treaty had been made in 1870 for the control of the great trade route to Central Asia through Kashmir, but there was no Resident appointed to Kashmir and no claim had been put forward to any control over its internal administration. After the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1885 the British Government appointed a Resident to the Kashmir Court, and in 1887 an attempt was made to bring the frontier area of Kashmir touching the Russian Pamirs under the control of the Political Department. In 1888 the Maharaja was accused — and his powers of administration were taken away and handed over to a State Council presided over by the Resident and placed in realtiy under his orders. And immediately after the deprivation of the Maharaja's powers, the Gilgit Agency was established, and the political control of a large area of the State was in fact committed to the British Political Agent.

The Russian scare, however, had a happier issue in another way. To it was due the institution of the Imperial Service troops, by which the States voluntarily offered troops for the defence of the Empire.

Lord Dufferin was the first Viceroy to pay regular official visits to the States. Before his time the usual practice had been for the Viceroys during their tours to hold Durbars sometimes in some important city in British India, sometimes in their camps when pitched in a convenient position in some province. But the visit of the Prince of Wales a few years earlier made a precedent for such ceremonial visits as now became customary for Lord Dufferin and all succeeding Viceroys. There can be no doubt that the innovation was a good one, as it has led to a personal intercourse between the Representative of the Crown and the Indian Princes, and to better political understanding generally.

Personally Lord Dufferin showed himself very sympathetic towards the Indian Princes, and displayed a genuine interest in their affairs, but his primary concern was with the Russian negotiation which occupied his attention during the greater part of his Viceroyalty. He is, however, gratefully remembered for various graceful acts, such as the rendition of the Gwalior fortress to Scindia.

In the summary of the work perfomed during his tenure of office, he says:

"I had never any ambition to distinguish my reign by a sensational policy, believing as I did that in the present condition of affairs it is

> best for the country that the administration should be driven at a low and steady pressure."

In the policy of the Political Department he introduced no innovations. Aided by the occurrence of several Minority Administrations in Rajputana, Central India and the Punjab, the control of that Department over certain States steadily grew. There is little doubt that the idea of Political Officers generally was that it would be for the advantage of all the States as well as for British India if the principles laid down in the Mysore Instrument of Transfer were applied without discrimination to each Indian State.

The Marquis of Lansdowne, who succeeded Lord Dufferin at the end of 1888, also proved himself a very able administrator. To him must be given the credit of placing on a sound basis the system of Imperial Serivce troops inaugurated in the time of his predecessor. Lord Dufferin had asked 'those Chiefs who have specially good fighting material in their armies to raise a portion of those armies to such a pitch of general efficiency as will make them fit to go into action side by side with Imperial troops.'

This honest declaration of a sound policy has unfortunately not always been acted upon, and pressure had been applied to certain States which did not provide Imperial Service troops — pressure coupled with the hint that their failure to do so would be considered disloyalty. That by their treaties the States had fully paid for external protection and internal security was not the view accepted by the Political Department under the control of which the Imperial Service troops were placed.

Another act of Lord Lansdowne's administration which affected the States was the closing of the Mints to the free coinage of silver, and the fixing of the sterling value of the rupee at Is.4d. To aid in this policy it was expedient for the Government of India that as many States as possible should close any Mints they might own.

In maintaining close relations with the Indian Princes, Lord Lansdowne followed the policy of Lord Dufferin. During a visit to Hyderabad, in the course of a speech he thus expressed himself:

> "I have always recognized the advantages of the arrangement under which a considerable portion of the Indian Empire continues to be governed by its hereditary rulers, and to be subject to forms of administration differing to a considerable extent from our own, but inspired by our proximity and stimulated by our example. No one would be more averse than I should be to any change in our relations with the Native States inconsistent with the measure of local autonomy which they now enjoy."

Lord Elgin's administration may be described as the calm that preceded the storm of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty. Considerably, just and well-intentioned, not even his admirers ever said of Lord Elgin that he had either a policy of his own or the strength of character to make his mark on the complicated policy of India.

Lord Curzon, who took over the Viceroyalty from Lord Elgin at the end of 1898, was genuinely interested in the States and their welfare. The first speech in which he outlined his policy was delivered in Gwalior in November 1899. He expressed a firm conviction when on that occasion he uttered the words: 'The native Chief has become, by our policy, an integral factor in the Imperial organization of India. He is concerned not less than the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor in the administration of the country. I claim him as my colleague and partner.'

Lord Curzon's reign witnessed the high-water mark attained by the policy of considering Indian rulers as Administrative Agents of the Government of India,

deriving their rights, powers and dignities from the Crown. The theory had been one of slow development. But on that basis the political system of India was being, in fact, evolved by the Political Department, although so far it had not found public expression in any high official utterance. Lord Curzon was the first to openly state it.

'The sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged. It has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogative', were his words at the installation of the Nawab of Bahawalpur: a claim not to Paramountcy but to complete sovereignty;... Again at the installation of the Maharaja of Alwar, Lord Curzon declared unequivocally that the Government must satisfy themselves 'that the young Chief has received the education and training that will qualify him to rule over men', before entrusting him with the task of administration.

This attitude of considering the rulers of Indian States as servants of the Government of India, bound to take orders from Simla and Calcutta and having no rights of their own, was best illustrated in the circular issued by Lord Curzon's Government stating that before an Indian ruler left India the permission of the Viceroy should be obtained.

Lord Curzon's general attitude at the Imperial Durbar, where the rulers thought they were treated with indignity, even in petty details (i.e. as when the Government of India required the Gaekwar to change the livery of his servants), also created uneasiness in their minds.

Lord Minto's Viceroyalty (1905-11) was an interval of reduced pressure, after the tempestuous excitement of Lord Curzon's regime. Though his appointment was made under a Conservative Government, his viceregal term in India synchronized with the Liberal administration of 1906 and the tenure of the India Office by Lord Morley. So far as his dealing with the States were concerned, he worked on the sound principle of first getting to know intimately as many of the rulers as possible, recognizing doubtless that for practical purposes each Prince was his State. He inaugurated the habit of consulting the Indian Princes on matters affecting the welfare of India as a whole, of the Provinces as well as the States, and so indirectly helped to create a sense of unity of interest among the Princes which had previously been non-existent. Lord Minto took a keen interest in the history of their relationships, and the previous official connection of his family with many of the States gave him additional interest in the welfare of the rulers. His speech at Udaipur in 1909 made this amply clear. He said, 'I have made it a rule to avoid the issue of general instructions as far as possible and have endeavoured to deal with questions as they arose with reference to existing treaties, the merits of each case, local conditions, antecedents, circumstances and the particular stage of development, feudal and constitutional, of individual principalities.... My aim and object will be, as it has always been, to assist them, but I would impress upon them that they are not only the mouthpiece of Government and the custodian of Imperial policy, but that I look to them also to interpret the sentiments and aspirations of the Durbars.'

A third act of Lord Minto which helped the Princes to realize the changed attitude of the Government of India was to re-establish the State of Benaras. Lord Minto like his ancestor who succeeded Lord Cornwallis, realized that the policy of indiscriminate intervention was not likely to be productive of good results, and that the right policy to pursue towards the States was that of strengthening their hands and leaving them to evolve political systems suited to their own conditions. Lord Minto left the Princes of India in a happier frame of mind than ever before.

The States possessed no rights except on sufferance, at the time of retirement of Lord Curzon. During the decade 1908-18 the isolation of one State from another

was as a rule of policy to some extent modified by the action of different Viceroys who consulted the Princes on various particular matters — consulting them as a class if not as a political body.

The conference of Princes, summond by Lords Hardinge and Chelmsford, eventually paved the way for the Chamber of Princes, which the Reforms brought into being, in 1921.

It was freely recognized in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report that the position of the States as it had evolved during the preceding few decades required reconsideration. The authors of the joint report recognized the injustice which had been done by the attempt of the Political Department to attain uniformity of practice.

Lord Reading writing to H.E.H. the Nizam of Hyderabad as recently as 27 March 1926, claimed that the supremacy of the British Government in India 'is not based only upon Treaties and Engagements but exists independently of them; 'it is the right and privilege of the Paramount Power to decide all disputes that may arise between States or between one of the States and itself, and even though a Court of Arbitration may be appointed in certain cases, its function is merely to offer independent advice to the Government of India, with whom the decision rests.'

The grant of Orders of Chivalry was another expression of the feudal idea. In fact, Lord Lytton wrote to Disraeli about Indian rulers: 'Here is a great feudal aristocracy which we cannot get rid of, which we are avowedly anxious to conciliate and command, but which we have as yet done next to nothing to rally round to the British Crown as its feudal head.' He proposed an Indian peerage and an Indian Privy Council. Fortunately for the rights of the Princes these proposals were not accepted.

The theory evidently has its basis in a personal relationship between the King Emperor and the Indian State. It seems to have been argued that by the abolition of the Company new rights were created in the Crown: that the authority, legal and constitutional, supposed to have been vested in the phantom Moghul Emperor became transferred to the British Crown. This idea that the Queen became the inheritor of the Moghul pretensions is really at the basis of the feudal and imperial idea, although it was expressly repudiated both at the time of the transference from the Company in 1858 and at the assumption of imperial dignity in 1876. If the Company did not possess these feudal rights — and admittedly they did not — it seems almost inexplicable that the Government of India should, not many years after the Mutiny, have put forward such a claim.

The theory of a kind of feudal Paramountcy which thus came to be elaborated in the time of Lord Mayo was a radical departure from the relations that existed between the British Government and the States up to that time. Both the Marquis of Hastings and the Marquis of Dalhousie had expressly repudiated any claim to a Paramountcy which justified interference in internal affairs. The Governor-General in Council states in 1821:

> "In the second paragraph of your first letter you say, that, you suppose our interference in the Nizam's affairs to be not merely right, but also a duty,.... as no less necessary than the guaranteeing of their rulers against revolution. The assumption of our possessing universal supremacy in India, involving such rights as you have described, is a mistake. Other States which have, by particular engagements, rendered themselves professedly feudatory the British Government does exercise supremacy; but it never has been claimed, and certainly never has been acknowledged in the case of Native Powers standing within the denomination of allies... the making of such a superiority a

principle singly sufficient for any exertion to our will would be to misapply that strength and to pervert it to tyrannic purposes."

Lord Dalhousie was equally emphatic:

"I acknowledge no mission confided to the British Government which imposes on it the obligation, or can confer on it the right, of deciding authoritatively on the existence of independent Native Sovereignties and of of arbitrarily setting them aside whenever their administration may not accord with its own views, and although their acts in no way affect the interests or security of itself or its allies.

"... the positive obligation of international contracts in order to obtrude on Native Princes and their people a system of subversive interferences which is unwelcome alike to people and Prince."

The Government of India did not at any time before the Mutiny claim any general Paramountcy over Indian States investing it with the right to order the rulers to conform to the wishes of the Government or to intervene in any matters outside the express provision of the treaty. After the Mutiny the position slowly changed. Lord Canning stated that the assurance against annexation did not 'diminish our right to visit a State with the highest penalties, even confiscation, in the event of disloyalty or flagrant breach of engagements'. This statement contains a claim which the Government of India had expressly repudiated before the Mutiny, and no Indian ruler had by agreement or by sufferance accepted.

Lord Canning had declared in 1860 that 'the territories under the sovereignty of the Crown became at once as important and as integral a part of India as territories under its direct domination. Together they form one direct care, and a political system which the Moghuls had not completed and the Marhattas never contemplated is now an established fact of history.'

Lord Mayo's words in his speech to the Rajput rulers, with which we have dealt more particularly earlier, were:

"If we support you in your power we expect in return good government. We demand... that you shall make roads, undertake more works of irrigation which will improve the condition of the people and swell the revenues of your States; that you shall encourage and provide for the relief of the sick."

The Act of 1858 made it perfectly clear that no additional rights by that transfer accrued to the Crown. Its last clause provided that 'all treaties made by the Company shall be binding on Her Majesty'; and the historic proclamation of the Queen made the position perfectly clear:

"We hereby announce to the Native Princes of India that all treaties or engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable The East India Company are by us accepted and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part."

Thus that fact that the Moghul Empire disappeared, or that the Queen assumed the direct governance of India, or later took the style of Empress, did not, and could not, alter the legal positon of the Princes or convert them from allies to feudatories and the Government of India — or the Crown — from a predominant partner bound by treaties into a suzerain whose mandates were law. The policy which Canning began and Mayo developed was thus in violation of treaty rights and subsequent pledges of the Crown.

Subordinate co-operation is a phrase which is met with for the first time in official documents in the time of the Marquis of Hastings. In the treaty concluded by that Governor-General with the Maharana of Udaipur in 1818 it is laid down:

'The Maharana of Udaipur will always act in subordinate co-operation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy, and will not have any connection with other Chiefs or States.' The same phraseology is repeated in most of the treaties made by Lord Hastings.

Firstly, it can be seen from the text of the treaties that the clause deals exclusively with the conditions of external relations or military co-operation. The purpose was to see that the ruler taken in alliance did not disturb the general peace. The Udaipur treaty, for example, mentions actually in the same article that the Maharana will not have any connection with other Chiefs and States.

Secondly, these treaties lay down emphatically that the rulers will remain absolute in their own territory and that their internal sovereignty will not be encroached upon.

Thus the Jaipur Treaty, which also lays down the condition of subordinate cooperation has the following clause:

> "The Maharaja and his heirs and successors shall remain absolute rulers of their territory and their dependents according to long established usage; and the British Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction shall not in any manner be introduced into that principality."

At a later stage the presence of the Political Agent enabled the Government to charge him with additional duties and thus indirectly to enlarge his powers and correspondingly curtail the ruler's rights. For this there was no authority except the interpretation that the Government gave to the term 'subordinate co-operation'. The Bhopal case illustrates the silent advance. In 1863, when the Government of Bhopal appealed against the exercise of jurisdiction by the Resident which was against the clear provision of the treaty of 1818, declaring that 'British Jurisdiction in any matter will not be introduced into that principality', it was stated in reply that 'as Bhopal by its treaty has undertaken to act in subordinate co-operation with the British Government, it may be reasonably expected to accept arrangements of that nature.'

As long as the phrase subordinate co-operation was left undefined and the limitations within which 'advice' may be given are not understood and prescribed the Indian States must continue to be placed at the mercy of the Executive Government of India and its officers in the Political Department.

This is exactly how they found themselves when the crunch came in 1947. And Patel and Menon used this vague phraseology to their ends, with the blessings and blind-eye of the Viceroy, — who was the link between the Crown and the Princes, and was supposed to protect the right of the latter.

The let-down that the Princely Order felt was justified — but there was nothing they could do about it, they had vacillated for too long, they had missed the opportunity of standing as one Order in the field — it was too late. What followed was the deluge!

THE PARTITION AND THE DEMISE

The partition and the ensuing integration of the princely states into India and Pakistan radically changed two-fifths of the subcontinent which had been princely India. Princes were removed from their thrones, (almost) all states were absorbed into larger political entities, and new political pressures and policies brought about other far-reaching changes in the social structure of what had been princely India.

In many respects, however, the changes following independence in 1947 have not been nearly as radical as is generally pictured to be the case. While the initial processes of integration moved rather rapidly in India under the forceful leadership of Patel and Menon, similar events moved more slowly in Pakistan. The merging of the two Indias was not fully completed in either country with the legal termination of princely rule. Subsequent provincial boundary changes in both

India and Pakistan have continued to modify and undermine older political identities, but regional loyalties based upon earlier princely state boundaries have been remarkably persistent.

Though merger brought to many princely areas their first experience with competitive political parties and democratic elections, it would be erroneous to regard the princely states as 'devoid of politics' prior to 1947. Some, indeed, had instituted elections and semi-representative institutions much earlier. More importantly, groups and individuals who vied for position, power and privilege under the old order had continued to participate within the new system. The princes themselves had remained prominent features of the political and social life of independent India and Pakistan. Their privy purses and special privileges were maintained in both countries until late 1971 — nearly a quarter of a century after the formal 'demise' of princely India. While some withdrew from public life, it is certianly not true to suggest that they all retired into their make-belief world. Rather, many had filled important and sometimes leading political positions in both countries.

To refer to the Indian and Pakistani princes as 'traditional rulers' is perhaps as misleading as to call India and Pakistan 'post-traditional societies'. The important fact is that the political environment had changed and those princes who had been politically active after 1947 had to respond to changed and changing circumstances. The departure of the British from the subcontinent had left the princes without the protection and support they had previously received from an alien and colonial power. They had to adjust to a nationalistic and democratic environment dominated by indigenous politicians.

By 14/15 August 1947, all but three of the states which became a part of India had signed the appropriate instrument of accession. All three of the recalcitrant states — Junagarh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Hyderabad — were later preseurized into integration in ways which embittered Indo-Pakistan relations.

As stated earlier, the process of integration moved more slowly in Pakistan than in India. In part this resulted from Pakistan's much weaker position at the time of independence, from promises that the Quaid-e-Azam Mr. Jinnah had made to encourage rulers into joining Pakistan instead of India and from the greater physical isolation of most of the Pakistani states. Nonetheless, all ten of the states in Pakistan had acceded by mid 1948. The most hesitant of these was Kalat, the largest of the four Baluchi states. Like the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Khan of Kalat attempted to remain independent. Only an extended period of negotiation, the mobilization of the Pakistani army, and the accession of the other three Baluchi states brought about Kalat's compliance and accession.

Both India and Pakistan proceeded with the territorial integration of their states in a multistage and varied way. In India many of the smaller states were merged with surrounding provinces. Where this was not possible, groups of states were joined together in 'state unions'. Under another arrangement the larger states and a few of the smaller ones were allowed to retain for some time their separate identities. In Pakistan, the two Indus Valley states, Bahawalpur and Khairpur, continued as separate entities, as did the four frontier states of Chitral, Amb, Dir and Swat. The four Baluchi states — Kalat, Makran, Kharan, and Las Bela — were, however, merged into a Baluchistan States Union in 1954 and subsequently united with the formerly British-ruled province of Baluchistan.

Territorial reorganization in Pakistan in 1955 and in India in 1956 eliminated several of the states as identifiable units and reduced the status of many of the princes. In Pakistan, all of the previously separate provinces of West Pakistan were merged into a single unit. Bahawalpur, Khairpur, and Baluchistan thus lost their

separate identities, but the frontier states were exempted from the one-unit 'scheme' and their rulers continued to exercise near-complete internal authority and autonomy, due to Ayub Khan's whims. In India, the reorganization of state boundaries along linguistic lines in 1956 effected the disappearance of a separate Hyderabad and the merger of Mysore and the state of unions of Travancore-Cochin, Saurashtra, Madhya Bharat Vindhya Pradesh and the Patiala and East Punjab States Union with surrounding territories which had been British-ruled before 1947. Several of the more important former rulers, who until this time had been given positions of constitutional authority within their former states or state unions, were relieved of these responsibilities. Only in the four frontier states of Pakistan did hereditary rulers continue to rule after 1956, not counting of course the Maharajas of Sikkim and Bhutan. The frontier states of Chitral, Dir and Swat were finally absorbed by Pakistan in July 1969 under the martial law regime of General Yahya Khan.

The new government of India signed treaties with the Himalayan states of Sikkim and Bhutan because of their geographical location and their ethnic and economic ties to Tibet, in 1949, giving India control over Bhutan's foreign affairs, and in 1950, defining Sikkim as a protectorate of India. Both were thus left in a state of semi-independence. Bhutan's late ruler, provided his state with a democratic constitution and with Indian sponsorship, obtained membership in the United Nations. In March 1973, ethnic conflict erupted in the state of Sikkim. The Government of India sent troops to restore order, appointed an Indian Civil Servant to administer the state, sponsored negotiations whereby the ruler agreed to a new constitution and a more representative assembly. In the summer of 1974, the Sikkim assembly requested and the Indian parliament agreed to permit, two non-voting representatives of Sikkim to take seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament. Subsequently, the state was granted full statehood within the Indian Union, and the ruler was removed from power.

The former rulers of the Indian princely states had gone through a series of at least four states of integration, each of them constituting, on the whole, a form of downward mobility for the ruler and his family: accession, merger, the end of guaranteed political status and abolition of privileges and privy purses.

The political vestiges of India's princely state heritage are numerous. One such vestige is the persistence of regional loyalties and identities based upon earlier princely state boundaries. A second result of the 'two Indias heritage' is the differing levels of political development and behaviour to be found within India and Pakistan. The relative lack of political experience of the subjects of most of the princely states of India and Pakistan had been reflected in the post-independence period in lower levels of voter participation, higher levels of invalid voting and quite diverse pattern of party institutionalization. The final vestige of India's princely state heritage which merits attention is the political activity of a large group of former rulers in independent India and Pakistan. That many had had administrative training and experience prior to 1957 is no doubt an asset. Another is the traditional loyalty of former subjects which several rulers were able to convert into political support.

The princes responded in a variety of ways to the challenges which Indian and Pakistani independence brought them. Some saw opportunity in throwing in their lot with independent India. Others resisted to point of armed conflict. Several rulers supported outlaws against the popular government. In Pakistan, armed revolt by the tribal supporters of the Khan of Kalat was one factor precipitating declaration of martial law in 1958.

The princes also turned to several different occupations. Many retired from public life. Some turned to business, and many others to the management of their private lands which they had been able to retain. Many others, however, found places in the new regime. The Jam Sahib of Nawanagar served as India's representative to the United Nations and as Governor of Madras. The Maharaja of Mysore served a term as Governor of Mysore, then another as Governor of Madras before retiring from public life. Maharaja Karan Singh of Jammu and Kashmir served until 1967 as Sadar-i-Riyasat (head of state) of Jammu and Kashmir under a special provision that allowed for his election by that state's legislative assembly. In 1967, he was elected to the Lok Sabha and joined Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet, first as Minister for Aviation and Tourism and later as Health Minister. Several other former princes joined the Indian Foreign Service, the Administrative Service, or took regular commission in the military.

The most prominent ex-rulers had been those who had entered politics. A total of more than 150 princely politicians were candidates for the legislative assembly. Most of these individuals were elected once or twice and several had held state or national office within the government or within their respective political parties. Several had served as state ministers, two as state chief ministers, at least two others as state assembly opposition leaders, and at least two as members of the central cabinet. Princes and their relatives had worked on political campaigns, endorsed candidates, contributed money or jeeps or manpower to campaigns, contacted government officials for redress of grievances, and served within local government bodies. Among the smaller number of Pakistani princes, at least three former rulers had similarly been provincial governors or chief minister.

Who are the princely politicians and how are they to be distinguished from their political brethren? While in one sense every individual case is unique, there are a few common factors which appear to be important. The first of these is region. In some parts of India, more than half of the princely families had had members stand for state or national elective office. While in others, fewer than a fifth of the princely families had fielded assembly or Lok Sabha candidates. The explanation for this is to be found in the relative size of the states in these regions. Another important consideration, however, had been the attitude of the provincial political leadership with these regions

Another major differentiating characteristic of the princely states was their size and status. The participation rate of families from princely states which were over two hundred square miles in territory and over five thousand in population is much higher than of those from smaller states. Since the rulers of the smaller states were frequently little more than large landlords, whose resources in money and public support were relatively limited.

A third measure of princely state prominence the prestige — gun salute — shows similar patterns. One hundred and twenty of the Indian and Pakistani princely states were accorded salute rankings by the British, ranging from 9 guns for the least prestigious salute states to 21 guns for the most important. Roughly a quarter of the non-salute families had fielded candidates for office, while nearly half of the salute state families have done so. At least, two of these three measures of princely state size and status suggest that the greatest level of political participation had not been among the very largest, most populous or most prestigious states, but rather among what might be called the upper-middle-level families: those from states which had 17-gun salutes, and a population (in the 1931 census) from half a million to a million. These are at a level where financial resources and reputations would be great enough to support a political career, while the countervailing attitude to aloofness, which affected some of the rulers of the very largest

states, would be less in evidence to inhibit such activity. Religion, caste, and clan are not particularly important in determining which princely family stands for office, but they have frequently been important in determining the nature of support for such princely candidates. All of the princely states which became a part of Pakistan were ruled by Muslims and around eighty or ninety per cent of these which became a part of India were ruled by Hindus. Religion, caste and clan affinities had been politically important in several other ways. First, like other political candidates, members of princely families may have a special electoral appeal for voters with whom they have such ties, and may be recruited to stand for office or exploit that appeal. The Nawab of Loharu, a small Muslim state on the Haryana-Rajasthan border, was persuaded by Rajasthan Congress leaders to contest a predominantly Muslim constituency in Jaipur in 1962. In the 1971 parliamentary elections, the Maharaja of Bharatpur, recognized as a ceremonial leader of the Jat community, campaigned with the Nawab of Pataudi, a Muslim ruler whose fame comes more from his exploits on the cricket field than from politics, in an attempt to get both elected to parliament by capturing Jat and Muslim votes. The Maharaja of Patiala, who was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1967, benefited from his former position as the ruler of the leading Sikh state. Similar electoral benefits of primordial affinity have accrued to the Jodhpur family (head of the Rathor Rajputs), Jaipur (head of Kachwaha clan), and others. Perhaps the most interesting use of primordial electoral appeal is that of Nawab Iftikhar Ali Khan of Malirkotla who, though a Muslim, draws heavily and consistently upon Sikh support in his predominantly Sikh constituency (and former state). It is reported that an ancestor of the Nawab had given portection to the son of an early Sikh leader against his threatened death at the hand of the Mughal Emperor. Building upon this base, the Nawab affects the life style of the Sikhs in notable ways. Though he is clean shaven, he wears a turban in the Sikh style. At one point in his career, he also joined the Akali Dal, a predominantly Sikh political party, thereby becoming the first non-Sikh member of that party in the state legislative assembly.

Like other politicians, many princes find family ties to be important politically as well as socially. Many of those princes who are in politics are closely related to one another. Family ties among politically active princes are not necessarily cordial. In the Muslim state of Rampur, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, a brother of the Nawab and a member of the parliament, ran his mother as a candidate against his brother (the Nawab) in the 1969 mid-term assembly elections. In the 1971 parliamentary elections, the junior and senior Begums of Bhopal split their support between opposing candidates. In such instances palace politics had become public.

In the 1967 and 1971 elections, several princes did leave the Congress Party. In 1967 this was related to a general breakdown in that party's ability to resolve internal conflicts and maintain the grand coalition it had enjoyed since independence. The 1971 gathering of princes in the opposition reflected the prominence of the privy purse abolition issue. The 1971 parliamentary election were in a sense of referendum on the abolition of privy purses and princely privileges. Mrs. Gandhi dissolved the Lok Sabha a year earlier than its full term after the Supreme Court of India declared her previous de-recognition of princes to be unconstitutional. Consequently, only those princes who agreed with the abolition policy, such as Maharaja Karan Singh of Jammu and Kashmir, remained firmly attached to the Congress Party. However, after Congress won those elections and carried through with the termination of princely privileges in December 1971, several old ties between Congress and the princes were re-established in time for the state assembly elections in early 1972.

The princely politicians also enjoyed close relations with nationalist leaders in Pakistan. The Quaid Mr. Jinnah was reportedly even friendlier to the Pakistani princes than Nehru was to those in India. Such ties between the princes and the ruling elite did not end with the coming of martial law in 1958. Though an armed revolt by the Khan of Kalat was the ostensible reason for the declaration of martial law, President Ayub Khan later resumed the deferential treatment of the landed aristocracy, including the restoration of the Khan of Kalat's power in 1962. Despite the populist pronouncements of his Pakistan People's Party and his moves to de-recognize the princes and absorb their former states, Bhutto also made some adjustments in his naming of the Amir of Bahawalpur as governor of Punjab, the Khan of Kalat as governor of Baluchistan and the Jam of Las Bela as its chief minister.

I would also like to make an assessment of the causes and consequences of the termination of the special income and privileges of Indian and Pakistani princes in December 1971. Why these 'anachronistic' vestiges of feudal privilege should have been preserved so long after national independence? National political leaders from Nehru to Shastri to Indira Gandhi and from Jinnah to Ayub to Bhutto have treated the princes more as friends and associates than as implacable class enemies and have frequently found princely political support to be valuable for stability, progress, or partisan gain. A more fundamental reason for the preservation of such arrangements is that such was the price of the essentially bloodless revolution by which the princely states became a part of India and Pakistan. In India, the agreements reached through negotiations over accession and merger of the states were expressly guaranteed by provisions in the 1950 constitution. In Pakistan, the promises made by Jinnah to secure the accession of the princely states seemed even more binding upon a newly independent country whose resources were sorely taxed by other pressing demands. This being the situation: why were the privileges and income which were guaranteed to the princes in perpetuity terminated at all? And why did the two countries of India and Pakistan, whose previous experience with the princes had been in many ways quite divergent, chose almost the same time to abolish princely privileges? In both countries the answers to the first of these questions lie more in crisis suffered by the political system than in the behaviour of the princes or in any of the legal arguments surrounding the cases. Despite the fact that the Indian and Pakistani rulers were shorn of their status within days of one another, they arrived at that point by quite different processes.

The demand for the abolition of privy purses in India grew out of the electoral defeats suffered by the Congress Party in the fouth general elections in 1967. Following the elections, in June 1967, Congress strategists met and decided that the party's image had become tarnished and needed to be rejuvenated by an infusion of socialist ideology and programme. In response, a group of princes formed in August 1967 an organization called the Consultation of Rulers of Indian States in Concord for India. One of the major and most immediate purposes of the consultation was to lobby against the governmental threat to the princes' status and income. The government and the princes' representatives carried on intermittent negotiations for more than three years. Eventually the governament introduced in parliament a bill for the ending of special princely status. The bill was defeated in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament, by a mere fraction of a vote. In quick response, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, President V. V. Giri withdrew recognition from all of the princes by presidential order. Eight former rulers took the matter to court and in mid-December 1970, were rewarded with a Supreme Court declaration that the President had acted unconstitutionally

and had exceeded his power. It was at this point that Mrs. Gandhi, dissolved parliament and called for fresh elections. Mrs. Gandhi's party secured an impressive majority in the 1971 elections. She did not immediately return to the princes issue, however, as the country was almost immediately afterward taken up with the Pakistani civil war in Bangladesh and the flood of Bengali refugees into India. India entered the war in December 1971 and swiftly moved to a 'decisive' victory. In the wake of such performance and in the closing days of the winter session of parliament, the constitutional amendment bill was reintroduced and swiftly passed by both houses of parliament without difficulty, thereby removing from the constitution all mention of princely privileges.

In Pakistan, President Ayub Khan, in March 1969, was forced to declare martial law and place the government in the hands of General Yahya Khan. On 28th July 1969, President Yahya Khan announced in a broadcast to the nation the arrangements whereby he would return Pakistan to a parliamentary system with direct representation based upon the principle of one-man one-vote. He also announced very briefly that his administration had decided that the time has come to merge the states of Chitral, Dir and Swat in West Pakistan.

The elections promised in Yahya's speech of mid 1969 were held on 7th December 1970, but the constituent assembly which was to meet afterwards never convened becasue of differences between East Pakistani and West Pakistani leaders, culminating eventually in fullscale civil war. General Yahya Khan then turned the government over to Bhutto, whose Pakistan People's Party had secured a healthy majority of West Pakistani seats in the elections. He took over the Government of Pakistan on 20th December. On 23 December 1970, he ordered that privy purses, privileges, and titles of all the rulers of acceding and merged states be abolished.

In both India and Pakistan, it was the temporary weakness rather than the overwhelming strength of the national leadership which led to the formal end of the princely order.

How has 'de-recognition' changed the role of the princes in India and Pakistan? The immediate effect, at least for a large number of the smaller state rulers in India, had been economic hardship. The government earlier promised to provide help and assistance to ease the hardship of less wealthy princes, but legal difficulties and some expression of public opinion against such arrangements created extensive delays. The controversy surrounding privy purses had brought some damage to the prestige and status of princely politicians.

On the other hand much remained unchanged. Congress recruitment of princely candidates in India for the 1972 assembly elections and the continued performance and prominence of princely politicians both in India and Pakistan suggest that the princely order still contains a large number of talented individuals with potentially valuable training, education, and skill. Though titles had been abolished, they are still quite widely used informally and most of the princes and their families are still accorded respect, deference, and — if need be — political support by their former subjects.

The princes appear destined to remain important in the public life of India. Though this may be on a reduced scale, particularly in India, some factors may actually work to increase princely political participation. In Pakistan particularly, the merger of the frontier states meant at least the beginning of a transformation of autocratic society into a democratic political arena. Moreover, in both countries a new generation of the princely families is now coming of age, endowed with memories of the greatness of their families and often unburdened by feelings of aloofness which hampered many in the generation who came to maturity prior to

1947. While not all of these by any means will enter politics, there are enough young politicians within the princely order; hence it appears safe to predict their continued political involvement within the changing arenas of Indian and Pakistani politics.

A dominant theme through this study had been the importance of the political environment in conditioning princely behaviour. The political system had defined the opportunity structures within which members of former ruling families had operated. They had no doubt responded to opportunities in different ways, reflecting their own individual background, experiences, and resources. Normal political conditions in India and Pakistan had generally been conducive to the public involvement of representatives of the old order, while crisis situations had tended to undermine that involvement. It is perhaps a mark of gradualness and peacefulness of the democratic revolution in princely India that the traditional rulers are still accorded legitimacy through their operation of the machinery of the democratic system.

The break between the old and the new is not as sharp as it could have been. The traditional rulers exist in post-traditional society only in the sense that much of the tradition had been re-moulded and reworked into new forms. The princely past of India and Pakistan remains pertinent to their political present. More so in India than in Pakistan.

The process by which princely rule in India was brought to an end has been discussed at great length by writers of widely differing viewpoints. The policies of the British crown in India from 1858 onwards had always contained contradictory elements. On the one hand, there was the concern with the maintenance of the imperial enterprise — the autocratic, repressive side of the split personality of the raj. On the other was the liberal aspect of the empire, the 'civilizing mission' which by the end of the nineteenth century had created expectations in the minds of many Indians of progress towards self-rule on democratic lines. After the departure of Curzon from India, policies in British India tended increasingly to prepare the way for the fulfilment of those expectations with the creation in 1909 and 1919 of new and more powerful elective institutions and the explicit declaration in 1917 that Indian self-rule was the ultimate aim of His Majesty's Government. These political advances did not of course entirely eclipse the more autocratic side of policy in British India, and in princely India, autocracy was allowed to flourish to an extent unknown for many decades.

During the late nineteenth century and culminating in Curzon's viceroyalty, the British intervened increasingly in the internal affairs of Indian states in order to mitigate the most severe abuses of princely autocrats. The arrival of Lord Minto, however, brought a reversal of this trend. With the increasing liberalization of British India's political system and the growing strength of the Indian National Congress, it was felt that the support of the princes might ultimately prove essential to the maintenance of British control in the subcontinent. Consequently, Minto publicly took a step away from Curzon's interventionism by stating that the great variety which existed among the princely states required a wide variety of approaches to the problems of the states. Lord Hardinge, who had to court the support of the princes for the war efforts, tipped the balance still further away from interference in states internal affairs.

When the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms bestowed much greater powers upon elected politicians, the British felt it necessary to adopt a laissez-faire policy towards the states, to which there were few exceptions over the next two decades, in order to assure themselves of a counterweight to Indian nationals and democratic forces generally. Under Chelmsford, new rules were codified to guide

officers of the Political Department in their dealings with the states. The new code did not formally forfeit the right of the paramount power to intervene in a state's internal affairs without the ruler's consent. But where instructions were once mandatory they have now ceased to be so... Rulers were protected under the code from drastic change being imposed upon them during the years of their minority. Indeed, the British were so chary of ruffling the sensibilities of rulers that they refused to press for the abolition of forms of forced labour and slavery, which they knew to exist in the states, after signing the League of Nations agreement to do so.

Relations between the British and the princes came to be characterized more by consultation as between partners than control of subordinate by superior, particularly after the establishment of the Chamber of Princes in 1921 which allowed rulers direct access to the Delhi authorities. Procedures were established in 1920 and 1932 for the arbitration of disputes between states and the Crown, and viceregal pronouncements by Irwin in 1926 and Willingdon in 1932 further confirmed the policy of permissiveness towards the princes.

Thus between 1905 and the mid-1930s, as the British Indian political system steadily became more democratic and as the Congress developed into a credible alternative to the raj, princely India's autocrats were given a free hand to govern according to whim. The princes were allowed to persist in their autocratic ways not in spite of events in British India, but rather because of them. As advances were made in the provinces towards the fulfilment of the promise of the liberal side of the empire, the British still clung to the desire to maintain their sway over the subcontinent in some form for as long as possible. They used the states for this purpose. As a consequence, during the late 1920s and early 1930s, princely India came increasingly to seem the purest embodiment of the autocratic side of Britain's split personality in India, at the very time when the liquidation of autocracy was coming to seem increasingly certain and near.

During the 1930s, some of the more perceptive participants in estates' affairs recognized that the princes were being killed with kindness, that they were being set up for sacrifice in order to further the British aim of prolonging the life span of the raj. It was clearly too late to prepare most princes for the changes which lay ahead, given the momentum which the nationalist democrats had developed by the mid-1930s. And the weight of past practices and considerations of expediency prevented the British from adopting a policy of compulsion in their dealings with princely India.

This is clear from their reaction to the upsurge of nationalist activity in some states in late 1937 and 1938. The British greatly overestimated the strength of the Praja Mandals and state Congress organizations. In 1938 and after, the political Deparatment was ordered to try to persuade the princes to pursue constitutional and administrative reform and to remove abuses which might cause popular discontent. The paltry response which these pleas produced soon demonstrated that nothing short of compulsion could bring even modest change in the states. But by the early 1940s, the policy of acting only with the consent of rulers — which was itself an innovation on practices common during the late nineteenth century — was seen an integral part of the Crown's treaty obligations to the princes. This view was historically inaccurate. But policies which had existed over three decades died hard, particularly in wartime when it would have been inexpedient to risk political and financial support which the princes could offer, the British cause. The influence of such considerations upon British policy and the hopelessness of the princes' position will be more clearly seen from the predicament of the smaller states during the last years of British rule.

The smaller states offer the most telling evidence that the fate of the princely order had been sealed well before 1935 by the permissive treatment which nearly all states had received from the paramount power. The category of 'smaller states' was defined in various ways. But whatever definition was used, an overwhelming majority of the 565 or so Indian states fell with the category, as did a substantial proportion of princely subjects. However, the smaller states derive their importance less from such statistics than from three facts concerning their position during the late 1930s and early 1940s. First, they represented the princely order's most vulnerable flank inasmuch as they were extremely disorganized, easily panicked and highly incapable of coping with the threat of change. Second, it was in their dealings with the smaller states that the British made their only vigorous efforts to prepare the princes for the future. And third, the failure of that effort is evident from the fact that it was the smaller states which provided Vallabhbhai Patel and V. P. Menon with an opening in their effort to force the princely order to capitulate utterly to the demand for parliamentary democracy.

The rulers of the smaller states themselves, and the structure of the princely order, were in part responsible for the hopelessness of their position after 1935. Most states in the late 1930s had made little or no effort towards constitutional advances. Given the growth of populist politics in British India and the restlessness of some princely subjects for a voice in the political process, it was clear to the British that some liberalization was urgently required in the princely states.

The highly irrational reactions of a great many rulers of smaller states to the merest hint of a change in their situation thwarted efforts to aid them. The inability of the British in 1938 and 1939 to persuade provincial Congress government to treat neighbouring princely regimes warmly caused panic in small states. The consequent panic among many princes caused them to react with confusion to suggestions designed to enhance their ability to survive.

Even on those rare occasions when a ruler could be persuaded to introduce changes within his state, his relationship with his neighbours could delay or even prevent their implementation. As a result, the Agents of the Political Department were instructed to consult a reformist prince's neighbours before permitting changes in his administration or constitution. This made the reform process hopelessly cumbersome. This problem of suspicion between neighbours also bedeviled efforts to promote co-operation and joint administration between states.

Despite all this, the greater share of the responsibility for the failure of the smaller states to adjust to changing condition lies not with the rulers themselves but with the British. Two factors contributed to this failure: the structure through which the British dealt with the states and the circumstances in which the British found themselves in their relationship with the princes.

The structure which had been developed to handle princely affairs was the Political Department. On several counts, the Department was very ill-suited to the task of promoting administrative and constitutional change in princely India. First, on purely technical grounds, it was incapable of fulfilling this task. Until the late 1930s, Political Agents had acted as rather aloof watchdogs over states' affairs. As a result, a few of them possessed the experience of direct administration which would have been required to initiate modernization in the small states with their incompetent or nonexistent bureaucracies. The Political Department's officers were recruited according to criteria which ensured that many of them would be less than fully capable of administrative task, and that, from the late nineteenth century onwards, the service was seldom thought to be equal to the tasks which faced it.

Even if these men had the expertise required, the Department's cadre was clearly too small to accomplish their post-1937 assignment. For several decades before 1937, the service was chronically short of manpower and that this problem had been exacerbated during the 1920s when the number of smaller political agencies had been reduced in an effort aimed at consolidating the structure of the service. The burden of promoting reforms in the small states was imposed upon them without any reduction in their normal duties so that the time available was inadequate to the task and from early 1940, when the war in Europe ended, until 1945, Political Agents were so heavily preoccupied with winning and maintaining the support of the states for the war effort that the reformist effort became a secondary concern. This is demonstrated by the slow pace at which the Department's machinery operated on the amalgamation and reform of smaller states, even in such matters as information-gathering.

If the inability of the Political service to serve as an effective force for change was a serious obstacle, the unwillingness of many political officers to do so rendered the situations thoroughly impossible. The views of political servants tended to be anti-democratic on Indian questions, that Agents and Residents often sympathized with rulers with whom they dealt, and that many of them worked to sabotage federation — much tamer reform package than those which came after — because they saw in it a threat to the princes. This view is corroborated by evidence from the years after 1938 when the British effort to seek change in princely India developed.

The task of preparing the small states for an uncertain future was rendered all the more hopeless by the circumstances in which the British found themselves. A mood of listlessness towards the problem of modernizing the states existed not only among Political Agents but in Delhi and in London as well. This mood was the result of low expectations which the British officials had about the ability after decades of laissez-faire treatment of the princes generally, and of the smaller state in particulár, to react creatively to the crisis which faced them. The merest sign of progress in individual states were greeted with considerable surprise in British circles.

On his arrival, Wavell was much more impatient. He felt that the avoidance of compulsion... simply amounts to marking time. 'We shall have to come out in the open with the Princes sooner or later. We are at present being dishonest in pretending we can maintain all these small states, knowing full well that in practice we shall be unabale to'.

But once again, conditions prevented him from acting. In April 1945, when the Viceroy met officials at the India Office, it was decided that compulsion must finally be sued with the small states.

But they left the implementation of this to Sir Conrad Corfield who was not to take up his post as Political Advisor to Wavell until July and was not expected to undertake new policy initiatives until several months thereafter. As a result, moves to force a rationalization of the smaller states came far too late.

Many of these states offered some response to the British desire for advance towards institutions which permitted non-officials to have some voice in public affairs. But these reforms had very little substance. Even the most progressive rulers were clearly unwilling to share power with elected politicians. The Maharaja of Mysore, who had urged the Viceroy to act forcefully to confront his fellow-princes with the stark realities of modern times, himself refused to grant significant powers to non-officials. And his younger and more liberal successor, in the state which had been ahead of British India in creating a large elected assembly, tena-

ciously resisted demands for popular sovereignty until very severe agitation forced him to yield in late 1947.

The British would have preferred to see at least some of the states survive a transfer of power in some modified form as an integral part of a new Indian union. But quite apart from the political transformations that were needed within the states to give them some hope of survival, there were serious obstacles in the way of the princes agreeing to join such a union. With the lapse of paramountcy, they would become free agents, and from the early 1940s it was clear that enticements would be required to persuade them to take this step. The only effective enticements would be promises of protection by the Crown should princes decide, after a period as members of the union, to go alone.

Not surprisingly, the British were reluctant to issue such promises. They would have made the British hostage to princely whim and could generate bitter resentment among the leaders of the new India. The British kept well clear of such promises as they knew that these could not possibly be kept, saying only that the Crown would fulfil its treaty obligations to the states.

This was far too vague a promise to ease princely anxieties. Most rulers would have doubted the British ability to live up to detailed assurances had they been given, but this refusal to go into detail raised questions not only about British power but about British intentions as well. It only reinforced the rulers' natural inclination to ignore suggestions from New Delhi. The key word here is 'suggestions'. They used terms such as 'responsive' rather than democratic government meaning 'only approximation of representative institutions'. The British were unwilling to use their powers to compel substantial reforms in larger states. They consistently 'urged' reforms upon rulers from the late 1930s onwards. It was because they needed the princes too much, particularly up to 1945. Most of the rulers of larger states contributed generously to the war effort, and this took precedence over political issues in India until the Japanese surrender, Throughout the war the British were reluctant to alienate these princes. During the Quit India Movement, the rulers offered valuable assistance in containing the nationalists. And at least until the Labour Party's electoral victory in 1945, British officials in London and New Delhi assumed that they had much more time to prepare for the transfer of power than was actually available. They therefore lacked the sense of urgency that the situation demanded. Why was Mountbatten in a hurry?

But as important as any of these things was a political awareness in the minds of most British policy-makers — apart from the true believers of the Political Department — that it was too late to save the princes, small or large. If it never fully crystallized in their minds, this idea must still have weighed upon them as they reviewed the uninspiring choice of policies that lay before them.

They could 'urge' the rulers to make changes in their states, but that alone was patently inadequate. After decades of non-interference, the princes were too accustomed to having their own way within their domains. The only reliable way to bring substantial change was to impose it. But to do so would be to change the rules of politics so drastically that the princes would have been unable to cope. Their stunned reaction would have mixed shrill accusations of bad faith with desperate, perhaps brutal acts of obstruction — hardly a promising start on the road to modernity.

In seeking only to persuade the rulers, they were in effect admitting that they had succeeded too well since the days of Curzon in developing an anachronistic counterweight to nationalism. The princely order was beyond redemption and had been for some considerable time. Mountbatten was no Curzon and the Labour Government did not have a Montague.

Those who sought to preserve the princely order and those who hastened its end have levelled charges against one another. This is a welcome development, for it is time that we faced the fact that a number of these charges — though usually overstated — contain measure of truth. Whatever the reason, a close study of the material on this period indicates that in essence only one accusation has been made against those who worked for the survival of princely privilege.

Sir Conrad Corfield, Political Adviser to Wavell and Mountbatten, the highest officer of the Political Department, stands accused of 'failure to cooperate with his chief, the Crown Representative...' Nehru enlarged somewhat on this when he accused Corfield of 'misfeasance'. The doing of a lawful act in an unlawful manner. Elsewhere H. V. Hodson has said that Mountbatten was led to believe that Sir Conrad and the Political Department under him were working to band the states together and make them an independent force in new India'.

All of these charges including that which Mountbatten disregarded against his Political Adviser, appear to be true to varying degrees. No one denies Corfield's 'failure to cooperate' on several key issues. Corfield has made it clear that he felt that Mountbatten was being unfaithful to the Crown's commitments to the princes and that he was violating his instructions from Attlee. Corfield used this and the argument that he had the approval of the Secretary of State for India for his acts in defiance of the Viceroy's wishes to justify his refusal to co-operate.

Nehru's charge that Corfield was guilty of 'misfeasance' raises the question of the details of these acts of defiance. For this, we have no better guide than Corfield himself. He had realized, soon after Mountbatten's arrival in India in late March 1947, that the new Viceroy had little interest in the survival of princely privilege and little time to devote to states' affairs. In mid-way, he seized a chance to fly to London for consultations with the Secretary of State on the Political Department's plan for the dismantling of the apparatus of the raj on princely India. His main concern appears to have been to avoid a veto of the Political Department plan to have Residents and Agents destroy any documents embarrassing to the princes. This he managed to do and upon his return he took advantage of Mountbatten's absence to set the process in motion without the Viceroy's knowledge. By mid-June, this had come to the attention of Nehru who thus made his charge at a meeting of the Viceroy and Indian political leaders. Mountbatten did not defend his Political Adviser because he had concluded as early as 3 June, after learning of the destruction of documents, that the Political Department was too sympathetic to the princes to serve as an instrument of his policies. As a result, he had practically ceased working through the Department at that date. The charge of 'misfeasance' seems to be quite accurate in that Corfield had carefully obtained a strictly legal cover from the Secretary of State for acts which were clearly wrongful in light of the policies which Mountbatten was adopting in India.

Did Corfield wish to 'band the States together and make them an independent force in the new India? There can be little doubt that he did. He never goes so far as Sir Arthur Lothian who wished that princely India could have formed a third dominion — an absurd suggestion. But in his anger that Mountbatten did not aid the formation of a united front of princes against the emerging Congress government, he indicates that he sought such an independent role for the states.

The accusation which is made against Corfield is also levelled against the Political Service as a whole. One of the quotations from Hodson broadens the accusation against Corfield to include the Political Department. V. P. Menon echoes this with charges that the Department pursued a separate policy of its own. This generalization of the charge into a conspiracy theory contains a good deal of truth, but it must not be taken at face value. When he realized that Mountbatten intended to

assist the nationalists in their dealings with the states, Corfield called several of the strongest members of the Political Department to Delhi to assist him in resisting this effort. Nearly all political officers sympathized with the princes in the last month of the raj, and many aided Corfield in his efforts to assist the rulers. But some political servants were simply too remote from Delhi to learn in detail of this effort. Many and perhaps most, were too occupied with the tasks of closing down the political department. Additionally, they are said to have used unfair and unsavoury methods, blackmail, coercion or the threat of it, to compel the more reluctant princes to relinquish their powers. Finally, Patel and Menon are accused of having behaved cynically throughout this episode inasmuch as they are said to have known, even before the Instrument was signed, that it was a mere charade to beguile the princes.

It is difficult to quarrel with the first charge. It is a matter of record that, during the year following the transfer of power, the princes were in effect told that the Instrument was unworkable in that it left them with too much autonomy.

There is more controversy over the methods employed to bring about the capitulation of the princes. The official ministry version of the integration of the states and Menon's own volume on the subject seek to give the appearance of a smooth transition by minimizing the use of pressure against rulers and the pinces' recalcitrance. But a close reading of Menon will indicate that threat of coercion was clearly used to force the rulers of small Orissa states to yield in December 1947 — a case which was crucial because it gave the campaign to subdue the princes the momentum which was so vital to its success in the months thereafter. C. C. Desai, an I.C.S. man who assisted Patel and Menon, has described the use of threats quite unambiguously. Menon himself later conceded this to H. V. Hodson, and the use of blackmail has been confirmed by persons close to V. P. Menon. To say this is not to question the justification for these tactics — a problem which shall be dealt with later — but merely to observe that they were employed.

There remains the accusation that Patel and Menon cynically intended the Instrument of Accession, from its conception in June 1947, as a confidence trick against the princes. This problem is much more complex than the other two. It seems certain given the insistence over many decades by every leading Congresman that swaraj in the fullest sense must come to all Indians, that Patel and Menon intended ultimately to incorporate the states into the new India in a more complete sense than provided for in the Instrument of Accession. But if the charge is true in this general sense, it is misleading when couched in the specific terms of a plot to hoodwink the princes. When one considers the hair-raising situation with which Patel and his Congress Colleagues were faced in British India during July and August 1947, it seems unlikely that any detailed long-term plan was hatched. The Instrument was seen by all parties as a temporary document to prevent unnecessary dislocation until a formal constitutional structure of some sort could be worked out. There is no evidence to suggest that Patel or Menon had thought in specific terms beyond this step. After he had brought the rulers of some small Orissa states to heel in December 1946, Patel felt the need to justify his actions to Gandhi and Nehru lest they feel he had acted too impulsively. This suggests that Patel may have stumbled rather late upon a plan to deal with the princes, a plan which was at odds with the gradualist expectations of other Congress leaders. Menon has entitled his account of the events of the summer of 1947 'Stopping the Gap' and this seems an appropriate choice of words.

The former political servants who have made these charges have also levelled accusations against India's last Viceroy. One such charge is never stated explicitly, but is subtly implied by Sir Conrad Corfield and clearly implied by Sir Arthur

Lothian and Sir Edward Wadefield. This is that Lord Mountbatten participated in Patel's and Menon's supposed acts of 'deceit' over the accession on the three subjects. They base this insinuation upon Mountbatten's use of charm and moral pressure in July and August 1947 to obtain the agreement of the princes to the Instrument of Accession. There is no question that he used very strong doses of each to persuade the princes to accede. What is at issue are his motives for doing so and the question whether he was party to a Patel-Menon plan to inveigle the princes into an untenable position.

On each point, the accusers have only a very tenacious case. There is serious doubt as to whether Patel and Menon themselves, amidst the turmoil of that summer, had any prior plan to violate the agreement on the three subjects, other than a vague intention to consolidate the unity of India in some way at some future date. Mountbatten carried his support of the Instrument to the extreme of pretending to the princes and the Political Department that he had done this. But his descritption of the Instrument as a means of maintaining India's civic enterprise in a troubled time, as a 'basis on which common policies can be evolved in regard to the three subjects for the interim period, while the new constitution is being framed...' — which did not bind the princes to participation in the union — all of this should be taken at face value. Menon's statement that he and Patel decided upon the abandonment of the three subjects without Mountbatten's knowledge confirms this.

Motives are never easy to assess. But Mountbatten undoubtedly recognized the weakness of the princes' position, the inordinate dangers which princely recalcitrance could have posed in a situation already marred by communal strife and the pace at which events were moving. It thus seemed likely that he believed that princely interests, and Indian interests generally, were best served by an orderly if partial integration of the states into the framework of the new dominion. H. V. Hodson had said that Mountbatten simply lacked the time, given the severe crisis in British India, to engage in a systematic examination of the likelihood of the Instrument's survival as the basis for future relations between the states and the new central government. In his view, Mountbatten believed that it was the best princes could hope for under the perilous circumstances and therefore urged their accession. This seems the most plausible answer to a question which may never be finally settled.

Corfield had further charged Mountbatten with violations of his instructions from Attlee and hence with 'breach of promise' and with disruption of the official structure for dealing with the states at a crucial time. Perhaps in the most narrow sense, Mountbatten did violate the letter of Attlee's instructions. These stated that 'It is not intended to bring paramountcy as a system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but you are authorized, at such time as you think appropriate, to enter into negotiations with individual States for adjusting their relations with the Crown'. Corfield, who could find no justification in orders from the Secretary of State for Mountbatten's efforts to persuade the princes to sign the Instrument, claimed that the instructions above did not provide grounds for those efforts. If interpreted narrowly, they do not.

But neither do they bar such efforts. The point here is that Mountbatten found his instructions inadequate to meet the urgencies of the moment. Preoccupied as he was with events in British India, he acted instinctively to prevent princely India from becoming yet another source of disintegration. In doing so, he may have violated the letter of his instructions. But this was surely understandable and consistent with his overriding mission, which was to achieve the smoothest possible end to British rule in India.

The disruption of the official structure for dealing with the states certainly occurred. Corfield would no doubt trace this event to Mountbatten's decision in June 1947 to rely upon the new States Ministry to manage relations with the princes, which in most areas left the Political Service the menial task of closing down the residencies. But a more balanced view might hold that the Political Service, and not least Sir Corfield himself, were, as we have seen, to blame for Mountbatten's decision.

One final charge holds that the Congress leaders violated the terms of the transfer of power agreement with the British when they permitted Patel's States Ministry to assume the paramountcy over the states which had previously belonged to the Crown. It had been set forth as formal British Policy in the Cabinet Mission's memorandum of 12 May 1946 that paramountcy would lapse upon the bestowal of Independence, and this remained the British stance thereafter. The plan had been accepted by the Congress leaders within a few months of the transfer of power, Patel and Menon had succeeded in imposing the centre as a paramount power over the states.

They thus stand guilty of this charge, but having said that, it is necessary to add that the charge is founded upon a misconception, upon a charade. An analysis of this point will take us back to the heart of the whole problem of the princes' demise.

The treaties which provided the formal basis for British relations with the states linked the princes to the Crown and not to the Government of India. During the first four decades of this century, this formal distinction approved very useful to the British. For it was during this period that they deliberately allowed the princes to pursue their autocratic ways in the states so that the rulers would remain a loyal counterweight to nationalism in the increasingly democratic provinces of British India. As long as the states were formally bound directly to the Crown, they could play their part directly in the maintenance of the raj no matter how powerful the nationalist became within the Government of India.

When it became clear that the time was approaching for their departure from India, the British found this direct link to the Crown to be an embarrassment. They had kept themselves in such a superior 'paramount' position that the princes with few exceptions were in a powerless and backward condition. Radical change was thus certain to come to the states and — since the vacuum created by the decampment of one paramount power was bound to be filled by another — it was certain to be imposed upon the states by the new government at the centre. The paradox of two different Indias existing side by side — one advancing towards electoral democracy and the other mired in personal autocracy — which the expediencies of British policy had created — this paradox was clearly destined to pass away.

The British could see this coming, but because they had insisted for so long upon the sanctity of the princes' bonds to the Crown, they could not allow it to happen before the transfer of power without seeming to break the King's word. To prevent this happening, the Cabinet Mission plan asserted that paramountcy must lapse with British authority. This was to any realistic observer an obvious impossibility. But in order to spare the British embarrassment and to hasten the advent of Swaraj, the Congress leaders agreed to participate in the charade. Hence, while it is true that in assuming paramountcy over the states, Patel and Menon were violating the terms of the transfer of power agreement, we must realize that agreement was — in relation to princely India — a fig leaf to save the British from a very awkward situation. The Lothians and the Corfields refuse to see it as such. But that is only a measure of their inability to realize that long before 1947 princely India

had become a hopeless anachronism, a British piece on a chessboard, to be sacrificed when the game was up. Patel and Menon deserve not the wrath of the British but rather their gratitude for allowing a graceful exit from an unhappy predicament. What do they deserve from the 'Let-down' Princes?

CHRONOLOGY

EVENTS

1599	East India Company founded
1603	Accession of James I
1605	Jahangir, son of Akbar the Great, becomes Emperor
1612	Company's first factory at Surat
1623	Massacre of Amboyna
1625	Accession of Charles I
1627	Shah Jehan becomes Emperor
1641	Foundation of Fort St George at Madras
1649	Execution of Charles I
1658	Aurangzeb Alamgir becomes Emperor
1660	Accession of Charles II

	1665	Portuguese hand over Bombay to British
	1668	French East India Company founded
	1685	Accession of James II
	1689	Accession of William of Orange
	1690	Foundation of Calcutta
	1702	Accession of Queen Anne
	1707	Bahadur Shah I becomes Emperor
	1712	Farrukhsiyar becomes Emperor
	1714	Accession of George I, John Surman's mission to Moghul court
	1720	Muhammad Shah becomes Emperor
	1726	Mysore's courts established in the three Presidencies
	1727	Accession of George II, Rise of Maratha chieftains
	1739	Marathas conquer Malwa, Persians invade and sack Delhi
	1742	Dupleix Governor of Pondicherry
	1744	War of Austrian Succession
	1746	French capture Madras
	1748	Ahmad Shah becomes Emperor
	1749	Madras restored to British by Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle
	1750	Wars of succession in the Deccan and Carnatic
	1751	Siege of Arcot
	1754	Dupleix recalled to France, Alamgir II becomes Emperor
	1756	Seven Years' War begins Siraj-ud-Daula takes Calcutta and his prisoners die in the Black Hole
	1757	Battle of Plassey
	1759	Shah Alam becomes Emperor
	1760	Accession of George III
	1765	Robert Clive Governor of Bengal
	1767	War with Haider Ali in Mysore
	1772	Warren Hastings Governor of Bengal
	1773	Lord North's Regulating Act, the first Government instruction into the Company's Indian affairs
Warren Hastings	1774	The Rohilla War civil servant
	1775	First Maratha War
	1776	American Declaration of Independence
	1779	Second Mysore War
	1784	Pitt's India Act
Sir John Macpherson (civil servant)	1785	
2nd Earl Cornwallis (soldier)	1786	
	1789	French Revolution begins
	1790	Third Mysore War
	1793	Permanent Settlement in Bengal

Sir John Shore (civil servant)	1795	Marathas defeat Nizam of Deccan Hastings acquitted after impeachment
Marquess Wellesley (landowner)	1798	
	1799	Fourth Mysore War. Tippu Sultan dies at Seringapattam
	1800	Fort William College opened
	1802	Battle of Poona
	1803	Second Maratha War
	1804	War with Holkar
2nd Earl Cornwallis Sir George Barlow	1805	Death of Shah Alam, Wellesley recalled after siege of civil servant Bharatpur
	1806	Mutiny of Vellore Akbar Shah II becomes Emperor
Ist Earl of Minto (lawyer)	1807	
	1809	Metcalfe's mission to Ranjit Singh Haileybury College opened
Ist Marquis of Hastings (soldier)	1813	
	1814	War with Nepal
	1817	Pindari Campaign
	1819	Pacification of Centrai India
	1820	Accession of George IV, First coal mines at Raniganj
John Adam (civil servant) Earl Amherst (diplomat)	1823	
	1824	War with Burma
Lord William Bentinck (landowner)	1828	
	1829	Abolition of Suttee in Bengal, Start of campaign against Thugee
	1830	Accession of William IV, Abolition of Suttee in Madras and Bombay
	1831	Raja of Mysore deposed
	1833	Renewal of Company's Charter
Sir Charles Metcalfe (civil servant)	1835	
Earl of Auckland (lawyer)	1836	
	1837	Accession of Queen Victoria, Bahadur Shah II, last imperial descendant, becomes King of Delhi
	1839	Death of Ranjit Singh, Invasion of Afghanistan
	1840	Dost Muhammad deposed
	1841	First tea planted at Darjeeling
Earl of Ellenborough (politician)	1842	Retreat from Kabul

	1843	Conquest of Sind
Sir Henry Hardinge (soldier)	1844	
	1845	First Sikh War
Marquis of Dalhousie (politician)	1848	Second Sikh War
	1849	Annexation of Punjab
	1852	Second Burmese War
	1853	Annexation of Nagpur, Company's charter renewed, Bombay-Thana railway opened
	1854	First jute mill at Serampore, First cotton mill in Bombay
Earl Canning (politician)	1856	Annexation of Oudh

VICEROYS		EVENTS
	1857	Indian Mutiny begins at Meerut
Earl Canning	1858	Peace proclaimed, Government of India transferred from Company to Crown
	1860	Indian Councils Act, Macaulay's penal code becomes law
8th Earl of Elgin	1861	American Civil War begins, Politician Indian cotton boom starts
Sir John Lawrence	1863	Simla becomes summer seat of civil servant Government
	1864	Bhutan War
	1867	British Reform Bill passed
6th Earl of Mayo (landowner)	1869	Suez Canal opened, Birth of M. K. (Mahatma) Gandhi
Ist Earl of North Brook (politician)	1872	
Ist Earl of Lytton (diplomat and poet)	1876	
	1877	Victoria proclaimed Empress of India, Durbar in Delhi
	1878	Second Afghan War
Ist Marquis of Ripon (politician)	1880	Major-General Roberts leads forced march from Kabul to Kandahar 1882 Rudyard Kipling joins Civil and Military Gazette in Lahore 1833, Ilbert Bill
Ist Marquis of Dufferin and Ava (landowner and diplomat)	1884	
	1885	Third Burmese War, Inaugural session of Indian National Congress
	1886	Annexation of Upper Burma, Hindu-Muslim riots in Delhi
5th Marquess of Lansdowne (landowner)	1888	
	1891	Age of Consent Act, Bal Gangadhar Tilka

Lord Mountbatten



The Last Viceroy

A very colourful bu also a very controversial figure He is blamed by a number of writers that he bifurcated Pakistan in the manner he did, because he was not accepted as Joint Governor General by Mr Jinnah - the Quaid of Pakistan And did not believe that Pakistan could last

The point of difference between them was that the Quaid did not want to have one Governor General for two Dominians, for the simple reason that it was completely impracticable. Under the Constitution then contemplated the Governor General would have been bound to carryout the policies and directives of his cabinet in both dominians. When in Karachi to comply with Pakistan cabinet decision and when in Delhi the Indian government directives. He could have done nothing in the case of controversial matters between the two dominians; besides he would have tried to persuade both sides. If they stuck to their own points of view, the position of the Governor General would have been rediculous - he could have done more harm than good

The Quaid (Mr Jinnah) had made a counter-proposal, which for some reason has not received much publicity. It was a very practical and suitable one. He had suggested that Mountbatten should hold the position of Crown Representative and each Dominian should have his own Governor General The Crown representative should have binding authority in matters assigning from partition That could have prevented many of the undesirable things that happened. Mountbatten brushed it aside by saying that His Majesty' Government would not agree to it. This was a great tragedy



The last Commander-in-Chief in India

Auchinleck was accepted by both India and Pakistan as a Supreme Commander of both dominians for a limited period, to implement the decisions of the division of the Armedforces of India and their Assets. A task that broke his heart.

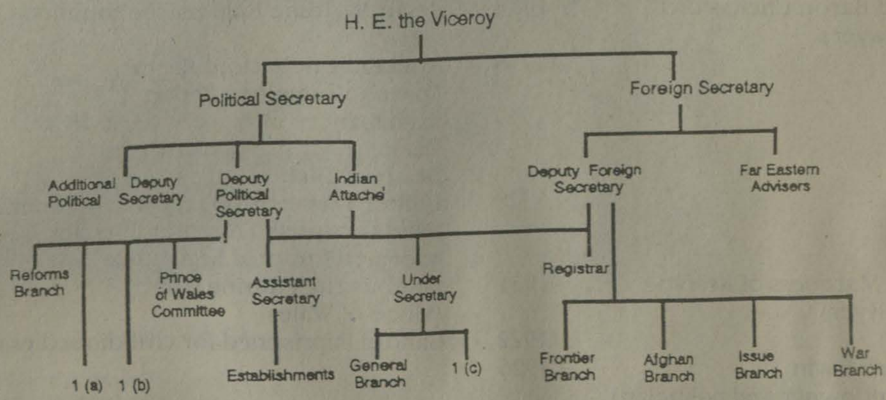
He resigned and left in disgust earlier than expected when his orders of transfer of Assets - the share of Pakistan - from India were not implemented. He never really recovered from this 'operation' - of slicing the 'body', the institution of this vast Armedforce in the making of which he had the masters hand. He had created the largest volunteer Indian Armedforces in the world 2.1/2 Million volunteer of all classes and creed - that fought side by side with the others, for the cause of peace and human dignity for all, in Europe, Middle East, Near East, South East Asia and Far East. It is today accepted by everyone who has some idea of the problems that without them the War could not have won.

He could not live in England because he missed his Hills of North Western Frontier of India now Pakistan, the Frontier hard rock low Hills where he had learned his profession among his Indian soldiers with whom he conversed in Urdu, Pashtu and even Punjabi (Gurmukhi) and the Pirpunjal Range of mountains of Kashmir. He died in Marakesh where the Atlas Mountain Hills reminded him of the terrain he loved

		begins extremist agitation
	1892	Indian Councils Act
9th Earl of Elgin (landowner)	1894	
	1897	Plague in Bombay
Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (politician)	1899	
	1900	North-West Frontier Province formed
	1901	Accession of Edward VII, Coronation Durbar in Delhi
	1904	Younghusband mission reaches Lhasa Co-operative Societies Act
4th Earl of Minto (soldier and diplomat)	1905	Partition of Bengal
	1906	Muslim League formed
	1909	Morley-Minto reforms
Baron Hardinge of Penshurst (diplomat)	1910	Accession of George V
	1911	King Emperor visits India and holds Durbar in Delhi, Announces switch of capital from Calcutta to Delhi, Partition of Bengal revoked
	1914	First World War starts
	1915	Gandhi returns to India after years in South Africa
3rd Baron Chelmsford (lawyer)	1916	Besant's Home Rule League founded
	1918	Montagu-Chelmsford Report, Rowlatt Committee Report
	1919	Disturbances in Punjab. Amritsar Massacre. Third Afghan War. Death of Tilak
	1920	Hunter Commission reports on General Dyer's actions in Amritsar. Elections for reformed Imperial Legislature
Ist Marquess of Reading (lawyer)	1921	Bombay riots during visit by Prince of Wales
	1922	Gandhi imprisoned for civil diobedience
Lord Irwin (landowner and politician)	1926	
	1928	Simon Commission
	1930	Gandhi's salt march to Dandi, Round-table conference begins in London
Marquess of Willingdon (landowner)	1931	Inauguration of New Delhi Irwin Willingdon, Gandhi Pact. Gandhi and politicians attend London conference
	1932	Civil disobedience begins again
	1935	Government of India Act
2nd Marquess of Linlithgow (soldier and politician)	1936	Jawaharlal Nehru becomes President of Congress.
	1937	Congress wins majority of provincial elections

	1939	Second World War starts, Congress ministries resign, Muhammad Ali Jinnah calls for Thanksgiving Day
	1942	Fall of Singapore. Subhas Chandra Bose arrives in Japan to recruit Indian National Army. Cripps Mission to New Delhi. Gandhi's Quit India demand
Viscount Wavell of Cyrenaica (soldier)	1943	Famine in Bengal
	1945	End of Second World War. New British Labour Government prepares for Indian independence
Viscount Mountbatten of Burma (sailor)	1947	Inauguration Day in Pakistan Independence Day in India
	1948	Gandhi assassinated, Jinnah dies
	1950	India becomes a Republic

The Viceroy's Foreign and Political Deppartment that dealt with the affairs of the princes. It did not have a Member of Council, the theory being that the Viceroy himelf was the Departments Honourable Member — as illustrated in the chart:



The Viceroy wore two hats, one for the Princes (Viceroy's) and the other ordinary one a (Governor General's) as the head of the administration of the sub-continent as a whole.

PART II

SOME OF THOSE WHO LEFT A MARK

KASHMIR

It may surprise some but my first contact, of course outside the circle of 'family', was with the Kashmir ruling family. Now the interesting thing is that they were not Kashmiris, but Dogras, from Jammu-Tawi (the river's name) area. To understand that I must explain how this beautiful part of the world came under the rule of the Dogras, who purchased the valley and all from the British for a paltry sum of Rs.75,00,000/- at the present rate of exchange for 350,000 Pounds Sterling — unbelieveable, but true and this included everything — human beings, and all the rich natural resources of the area. What does all this prove ?

That the man who did it, Gulab Singh by name, must have been a man of great qualities. He came from humble beginnings, like most of them proving that qualities can be found anywhere, like germs, in all kinds of grounds. It also proves how badly off the British were at the time and how much pressure there was from

Leaden-Hall Street, the headquarters of the East India Company in London, on its servants in India to stop spending so much on wars and to send some more money home.

It proves another point that there must be a 'Being' up somewhere in the heavens and that all this does not happen because of some accidents, uncontrolled and undirected. Qismat (fate) may be difficult to describe and even understand, but that also has its fascinating patterns. And the pattern that Qismat made in the sub-continent of India is far more colourful and fascinating than anything I have seen or known, or read, anywhere else in the world. That is why the study of these princes is so fascinating, though annoying to some, for understandable reasons; mainly because such accidents didn't come their way.

I first went to Kashmir when I was about seven. My first contact with a Prince was with one who was quite unique in his own way. He was Maharaja Partap Singh, the Dogra clan ruler of the state of Jammu & Kashmir, of the area of the size of France if not larger. The family had gone there for the summer and we were accommodated in the 'Nanpara' (the Raja of Nanpara was a big landlord of Bihar in India). He had beautiful houseboats: most comfortable, floating palaces, on the Jhelum river. They were all moored to the bank near an almond garden and in the area we had a lovely Chinar tree, which was my favourite spot because I had a swing put on one of its protruding large branches where most of my time was spent. Why I enjoyed this swing ? I don't know, all children do, why ? Because they are off the ground ? Because they move through the air on a swing and then down and then up again — it tickles their heart ? or does it tickle their imagination, even in that early age, flight through the air does something to the mind. Can they perceive what motivation can do — the more they bend their knees and push on the board, the higher they go. And do they reason that they can go only that high and no more, or they would fall — why ? I had no idea then of the angles and tangents and the forces that play their part, not even of the gravity of earth, that kept one glued to the ground.

This knowledge, these discoveries, these limitations, came much later, to spoil the joy, that I enjoyed so much when in company of my swing and none else. But I must have thought of something, I couldn't have been blank, and I have always kept my brain active, even if it be in naughtiness, sometimes I started recording things. From the time I started appreciating places, people and the joy of being with a horse and then riding it. I loved horses, it's the first thing I remember in my life — sitting in front, sitting between the pommel of the saddle and the man, attendant on my father on a lovely chestnut with white stockings and father riding in front on a beautiful thoroughbred bay crossing a water channel, which I learnt much later from the man who carried me in the saddle, was the Sahabi nuddi (seasonal stream) that comes from the hills of Rajasthan (Alwar side), to water the sandy soil of Pataudi, in the monsoons.

Small ponies had been procured for us to ride and to my annoyance mine was the smallest, but it was grey, different to my brother's and sister's so I was one up on them. My sister was the eldest and the naughtiest, and then my brother, who somehow always did the right things, while my Apa (elder sister) and I were always on the mat for doing things that are 'not done'.

I remember being asked to come off the swing by my sister, as tea had been served, 'Come and have tea and try on your dress for tomorrow', I remember shouting back, 'What dress, why, what's happening tomorrow?'. Don't argue, come, or there will be nothing left of the cake'. That decided the issue. I jumped off the swing and ran frowning to the room where we all had tea. I reduced my pace as I got near the boat and remembered to walk slowly tidying my hair with my

hands to face the Regent of God, my mother. My God, she was regal. And were we scared! The only one who I think wasn't was my sister; she really was very naughty I remember. But in Buajan's presence she was as docile as can be. They had all started, but the cake was still there so it was all right.

Bhai, my elder brother, and I were told that the next day we were being taken to pay respects to the Maharaja Sahib, at the city palace, at ten o'clock sharp. The Maharaja was sending one of his boats. We were to wear achkans (a closed collar frock coat) and safas (turbans). This was a blow. I didn't mind achkans but this safa was a terrible bore, one couldn't move one's head properly in case it fell off and it had to be tied by a servant who was an expert at it, and the only one, as far as I knew; so if an accident happened one could be without any headdress with ruffled hair in front of the Maharaja. Bhai quite enjoyed this kind of dolling up and could manage his turbans better. Of course I had to open my mouth in the middle of it by asking, what I thought was an excusable question at the time,'What is Apa going to wear ? 'I got a look that cannot be described, one of surprise more than annoyance, but with a touch of amusement too, 'the boy is inquisitive' kind of thing. 'Apa is not going with you. She will go separately with me to call on the Maharani Sahiba'. 'Which one? they say he has many?' Apa chipped in. 'Now you mind your own business and go and try your dress and show it to me', I remember looking at Buajan, as if asking 'am I to be inspected by her'. She gave the answer 'You show it to your sister, she is your elder; if any adjustment is required she will get it done.' The last remark I remember was not appreciated, because I felt I could have the adjustments done on my own. I took my leave by an Adda'ab (a bow with the right fingers and palm touching the forehead) and nearly tripped over into the river when I hit the plank that surrounds every houseboat, for one to move from one room to another, which is the corridor. My brother and I were in the other boat.

The remaining day was spent in preparation; in excitement. The achkans were selected and then the Sayla (golden thread cloth turbans) was also selected. I got the shorter one, which was an answer to my prayers, as they are heavy and slippery things, unless tied very tight which gave a headache anyway.

The morning came and then the long red and yellow boat with a canopy and with oarsmen in white and yellow turbans, came to take us to the city palace. I remember the scene as if it happened yesterday. We went up the steps from the river into a hall, a longish glassed affair along the river front, with a lovely long red carpet. Then we entered a corridor which led us to another similar hall which faced a huge garden at the back. His Highness was seated on a masnad facing the garden. His Highness, was a very short and very light weight person but wore on his head a turban that was nearly half his size. It was white, very white, sparkling with cleanliness. I write this because of my curiosity, even at that age of seven. He hardly spoke and when he did it was so soft that one could hardly hear. Maulvi Karamatullah was the interpreter. On our arrival we salaamed, he looked up, because we were standing and he was so small, smiled and then stretched out his hand for an embrace. I remember his taking my hand in his. He was very fair and his hands were small and very white, and soft. Some sweets and fruits arrived and some Kashmiri tea, old rose in colour with cream in it. I was keen to taste it but waited for a cue from my brother. He took the smallest sweet on the plate, so I had no alternative but to take the next smallest one, although there was a big yellow one too, on which I had fixed my eyes. His Highness smiled and said something. Maulvi Sahib translated, we should try some more, they are cooked at home and also the tea. So we had some more, I was hungry. And then went for the tea to help in getting them down but found the tea a bit thick. His Highness was watch-

ing us with a smile on his face leaning against the 'gaotokkia' (big support pillow) of his masnad, which was more of a silk carpet than an embroidered velvet cloth of which they are usually made of. His Highness was asking questions from our tutor about our education and sports. He asked my brother if he played cricket. He said,"Yes, Sir" in Urdu. He hadn't fallen in love with the game yet, but we had been told that His Highness liked it and played it with his turban on his head and with his own rules. I remember my asking H.H. Hari Singh, much later, about his cricket. He was quite light hearted about it. 'You see one of the reasons he liked this game, we think, was that it was slow and one could ask for a runner. He played by time. His maximum was an hour. He could not be caught and he could certainly not be bowled because if by chance the ball hit the wicket and the bails come off, it was instantly declared a no-ball. He enjoyed it because it was bit of 'tamasha' for him. He was a highly intelligent man and had a sense of humour. He had remarked once in the pavilion,"it is a good gentlemanly game that is why the British play it so much," he was very British.

His Highness, our H.H. Hari Singh, was the opposite of his uncle, whom he succeeded, because H.H. Partap Singh had no heir and the Guddi went to his younger brother, Ammar Singh's son. (More about H.H. Hari Singh later.) I must finish with H.H. Partap Singh. After tea the audience came to an end. As we bowed to take our leave, he embraced us and gave a small embroidered butwa (wallet) to both of us. It contained some coins I could feel and the other details were irrelevant to me, keen as I was to see what was in the butwa. We were taken back the same way we came, this time down the river. After seating myself in the long ceremonial boat I opened the butwa and found some Ashrafees (sovereigns) in it. I counted. There were seven. My brother had ten. He was fair, one for each year. I remember asking my tutor why His Highness was so stooped and drowzy and soft spoken. The reply was that he had taken some medicines. It was later I was to know that H.H. Partap Singh was the first 21 gunner prince. I was to meet.

Before I get involved in describing the affairs of Kashmir it is necessary to give a brief history of the territory that these Hindu rulers ruled; a large majority of their subjects were Muslims. This makes the history interesting and later when the future unrolls itself it will be seen how difficult and acute the problem was of Hindu rulers with Muslim subjects and Muslim rulers with a majority of Hindu subjects, and how it became the reason for war between India and Pakistan. Now for a brief history, they ruled this territory for exactly 90 years only.

The rulers of Kashmir were many and can be dated back to Ashoka, the great Buddhist king, founder of Srinagar. He ruled in 3rd Century B.C.

In 2nd Century B.C. Huska, Juska, Kaniska — there were Turkish kings, also Buddhist. In 6th Century A.D. was the Hun King Mihizakula who had extended dominions in Central Asia and was a patron of Brahmins. Then in 699-735, Lalitaditya who was victorious over Turks and expelled Tibetans from Baltistan. Then in (950-1003) came Queen Didda, who married a Lahore peasant; thence a new dynasty came, causing much strife.

And then came the Muslim Rule in 1339 when Shah Mir usurped the throne; founded a Muslim dynasty. Zain-ul-Abadin (1420-1470) who was a patron of learning — producing a prosperous reign — many Hindus were re-settled.

In 1588, Akbar conquered Kashmir. And his son Jahangir (1600) was the great garden-maker, in Kashmir.

In 1752, Kashmir saw the Pathan rulers and Kashmir became a province, subject to Kabul.

In 1819, The Sikhs conquered Kashmir under Diwan Chand and Colonel Mirza Singh; prosperity was restored.

In 1846 Gulab Singh, a Dogra Raja acquired Kashmir by a treaty with the British after the Ist Sikh War — the treaty of Amritsar, and got a territory as big as France and as beautiful as any beautiful country in the world, for a miserable sum of half-a-million pounds, with all its contents in it — forests, rivers, lakes, mountains and all four legged animals and two legged birds and human beings. The sum was paid in instalments and the receipt of the last instalment may be seen in Lahore in the Secretariat Museum.

Through all these vicissitudes of rulership, Kashmir as such has remained unaltered. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras have left little impression on the national character. The Hindu is still a Hindu and a Muslim is still a Muslim — religion has played its part here as well and the water and oil have not been able to merge even in these beautiful surroundings. The isolation from the outer world accounts for this stability of religious cultural beliefs. Hinduism is a religion born from the Himalayan ranges and Islam is a code of daily conduct, without priesthood, or Temple or Church or Caste; taking its birth from the deserts of Arabia.

Nanga Parbat (Diyamir) is one peak that fascinated me as one could see it 100 miles away from Murree Hills on a clear day. It is the culminating point of the Kashmir ranges and is considered, in some respect, the grandest mountain in the world. A peak 26,696 feet tall, though linked with the central chain of the Himalayas, it is turned at right angles to the general axis, and is parallel to the Indus where the latter takes a decided bend southwards. At its foot are large glaciers.

The outline and grouping of this great mass, rising glistening white with pinnacles of ice, and dome of snow, above the dark lower ranges just as some huge marble cathedral rises above all buildings is a sight never to be forgotten.

'Seeing amidst kingly mountains,
Monarch O'er showing high,
Girdled with glacial mountains,
Fenced by avalanches might.
Battlements towering skywards.
Pinnacles glistening bright
Who shall dispute Diyamir
The Crown that is thine by right'. A. N. 1887

But the awesome majesty of these mountains can only be felt. When travelling, in a small twin engine aircraft from Rawalpindi to Gilgit one enters the gorge of this mountain range where turning for a few miles, which seems to take so many hours, though only few minutes in reality, seem an impossibility. The wings on both sides seem a few inches from the hard old cold rock of the range of mountains. The first time I did this journey I heaved a sigh of relief when it was over. But one gets used to everything, and such hazards after a while also seem part of one's daily routine. After a while one starts enjoying this flirtation with death in this magnificent gorge and looks to the far distant Nanga Parbat as a tower of beauty to be conquered and possessed like a beautiful maiden. The Dogra rulers from 1846-1947, could not 'possess' this beautiful maiden. Even today in 1986, she is a bone of contention.

A place or an occasion is remembered because of an association with it in company of people who leave a mark on one. It is the human factor that is important; life to me has been an association of human beings and even magnificent beauty of nature is felt and enjoyed when viewed in the company of persons one loves.

I miss Kashmir today because of its extraordinary natural beauty, its rarity of presentation of nature at different times of the season and day. We have a Shalamar Garden in Lahore also built by a Moghul Emperor but I seldom go there. And when I do, I usually go alone so that I can walk about in it and be in the garden of the same name in Kashmir. The one in Kashmir was built by Jahangir, the contemporary of James I in 1669. Akbar, his father, the contemporary of Elizabeth-I made Nasim Bagh. Asaf Khan the prime minister and brother-in-law of Jahangir, brother of Nur Jahan, who became Jahangir's empress, made the Nishat Bagh, my favourite garden. There are many more gardens but I have named only my haunts. Darogha Bagh, on Manskal Lake was built for Nur Jahan.

The Moghuls were great garden lovers and were much handicapped at first by lack of water in India. They had to bring water from great distances. They disliked heat strong winds and dust, and took refuge in their walled gardens. One can still see many ruined gardens especially on the route to Jammu; in most cases they mark the royal camping grounds built for the convenience of the Court going to and from the plains.

The Moghuls certainly knew how to live but the climate gradually made them soft and living in garden palaces led to their getting used to living in luxury and forgot their ancestor's habit of sparce tent living with their hardy ponies tied close by. They became degenerate and weak, like all of them do some time or the other but they have left behind marks of their taste and culture. Admittedly I saw the gardens in ruins but even these ruins had a dignity and charm of their own; they selected their spots with care; the openings of their tents were towards a stream with a mountain view. Babar has noted in his memoirs the strange habit of the natives of India, setting their tents in a manner that the view and stream is facing the latrines and the opening of the tents towards a dirty track or a dusty road.

The history of the state, as it was constituted, as I knew it, was practically the history of one man, a Dogra Rajput, Gulab Singh of Jammu. Lying off the high roads of India, and away from the fertile plains of the Punjab, the barren hills of the Dogras had not attracted the notice of the Moghul invaders of India. Here lived a number of small Rajas and it appears that from very early times the tiny kingdom of Jammu was locally of some importance. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the power of the Jammu ruler had extended east as far as the Ravi, west to the Chenab; but the power waned and waxed according to the fortune of petty and chronic warfare. To the east at Barali and Kishtwar were independent Rajput Chiefs, while to the north-west were the Muslim rulers of Bhimber and Rajaori, descendants of Hindu Rajputs. These two states lay on the Moghul route to Kashmir, and so came under the influence of Delhi. Up the Jhelum valley, the country was held by small independent Muslim Chiefs, whose title of Raja suggests their Hindu origin.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, Raja Ranjit Deo was the ruler of Jammu; but at his death about 1780, his three sons quarrelled. The Sikhs were invoked and Jammu was plundered. From Ranjit Deo's death to 1846, the Dogra country became tributary to the Sikh power. Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh were the great-grandsons of Surat Singh, younger brother of Ranjit Deo. They were soldiers of fortune and as young men sought service at the Court of Ranjit Singh of Lahore. They rapidly distinguished themselves; and Gulab Singh for his service in capturing the Raja of Rajaori, who was fighting the Sikhs, was created Raja of Jammu in 1820. Dhian Singh obtained the principality of Poonch, a hilly country between the Jhelum and the Pir Panjal range, north of Rajaori; while Suchet Singh received Ramnagar, west by north of Jammu.

Ranjit Singh had found out that the control of the Dogra country was a difficult task and his policy of enlisting the services of able Dogras was a prudent one. The country was disturbed, each man plundered his neighbour. But Gulab Singh was a man of extraordinary ability and very quickly asserted his authority. His methods were often cruel and unscrupulous, but such were the conditions at the time that his penal system was successful in ridding the country of crime. He kept a sharp eye on his officials and a close hand on his revenues. Rapidly absorbing the power and possession of the feudal chiefs around him, after ten years of laborious and consistent effort, he and his two brothers became masters of nearly all the country between Kashmir and the Punjab, save Rajaori.

His easy successes in Kishtwar, which commanded two of the roads into Ladakh, probably suggested the ambitious idea of the conquest of that unknown land. The difficulties offered by mountains and glaciers were enormous but the hardy and determined Dogras under Gulab Singh's officer, Zorawar Singh, in two campaigns, brought the whole of Ladakh under the rule of the Jammu State. Zorawar Singh must have been a man of brawn as well as brain, he did not pillage the rich monastery which saved itself by allowing the army, in ignorance of its locality, to pass the gorge leading to the Hinis Valley, and sending a deputation with an offer of free rations while in Ladakh territory. The agreement was respected by both sides.

A few years later, the same Zorawar Singh in 1840 invaded Baltistan and captured the Raja of Skardu who had sided with the Ladakhis, and annexed his territory. The following year, 1841, Zorawar Singh while invading Tibet was overtaken by winter and being attacked when his troops were disabled by cold, perished with nearly all his army. Whether it was accident or policy, by 1840 Gulab Singh had surrounded Kashmir.

In the winter of 1845 war broke out between the British and the Sikhs. Gulab Singh contrived to hold himself aloof till the battle of Sobraon (1846) when he appeared as a useful mediator and the trusted adviser of Sir Henry Lawrence. Two treaties were concluded. By the first the State of Lahore was handed over to the British. By the second, the British handed over to Gulab Singh for Rs. 75 lakhs all the hilly and mountainous country situated to the east of India and west of the Ravi river.

Kashmir did not, however, come into the Maharaja's hands without fighting. Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, the Muslim Governor of the Sikhs, aided by Bambas from the Jhelum Valley, routed Gulab Singh's troops on the outskirts of Srinagar, killing his Wazir Lakhpat. Sir Henry Lawrence who was accompanied by Hudson, as the intelligence officer, was able to mediate and persuade the Sheikhs to desist from opposition and Kashmir passed, without further trouble, to the new ruler. And the Sheikh was allowed to take all his belongings, worth a great deal by any standards, to his Lahore estate. The family (my wife is a direct descendant of this old and able family of Lahore and Kashmir) had ancestral properties in Hoshiarpur district between the rivers Bias and Sutlaj.

Gulab Singh's Dogra troops relieved the Sikh troops at Astor and Gilgit; Natha Singh the Sikh commander, took service under Gulab Singh. Not long afterwards the Hunza Raja attacked Gilgit territory and after defeating Natha Singh in Hunza Valley, took Gilgit fort along with Punial, Yasin and Darel. It was recovered but in 1852 Dogra troops were again trounced by Gauhar Rehman of Yasin and for eight years the Indus formed the boundary of the Maharaja's territories.

Gulab Singh died in 1857 and after the Mutiny in which Ranbir Singh, his successor was heavily involved with support to the British, but determined to restore the prestige of the Dogras again attacked Gilgit, and took the fort and the

Maharajas of Jammu and Kashmir have held it since; to their heavy cost and doubtful advantage. But for face one does a lot and it matters a lot particularly when one rules a vast territory of aliens. The Dogra prestige was vital in the territories where the Hindus were in minority. A century later, a lot of blood was spilt in reclaiming these territories by Muslims who because of the birth of Pakistan were fired by the Two Nation Theory.

Ranbir Singh was an enlightened man but he lacked his father's strong will and determination and control over the state officials was weak. Later part of his life was darkened by a severe famine in his territories, in 1877-79. In September 1885, he was succeeded by his eldest son Partap Singh whom I had the honour of meeting at the age of seven. He was my first contact with the Maharajas of Kashmir.

The ruling family are Dogra Rajputs. The word Dogra is stated by the people to have originated from the fact that the cradle of Dogran race lies between the two holy lakes. Savion Sar and Man Sar, not far from Jammu. Drigartdesh or the country of the two hollows, was corrupted into Dogras. From Jammu stretching along the plain of the Punjab the country is Dogra and all who have lived in that tract, whether Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs, whether highborn Rajputs or low-born menials, are known as Dogras. All have certain national characteristics and a common tongue, which differentiates them from any of the other people of India. But there are some authorities that doubt this derivation, and say that Dogra is a corruption of Rajasthanic word for hills (dungar), and when the Rajputs forced their way up north they have this name to the hill country. The royal family claims to be Chaohan Rajput Dogras.

This brief historical background I hope will be useful for the readers who have had no opportunity to visit this fascinating subcontinent of Indo-Pakistan and where religion has played such an important part in shaping and reshaping the landscape identities of this vast peg that nature has driven in the huge ocean lake of the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, in which today nearly a thousand million people reside. They are of various shades of skin, from pure white to pure black. From acquiline noses to flat noses. From highly educated to no trace of education. From the richest to the poorest. With dozens of languages and hundreds of dialects. This background has a deep effect on the conduct of these rulers. Partap Singh was a devout Hindu but very careful not to offend any of his Muslim subjects. Hari Singh was the opposite of his uncle: secular, as a true secular should be.

This is enough for the history. As Hegal says, 'We learn from history that no one learns from history'.

But His Highness knew his history and I used to be amazed when sometimes he came out with some details. He never gave the impression of being a well-read man, but he was. And most shrewd in state affairs.

I remember his remark once when driving from Islampura (the district headquarters beyond Jammu on the road to Bannihal Pass and beyond to Srinagar), back to Jammu. He had gone there for some function. We were driving back in his favourite car, a red two seater Mercedes. He was quiet and then after we had gone a mile or two he came out with a remark, more to himself than to me 'I wonder how long all this will last' I knew how to keep quiet when he was in this pensive mood. After a while he said again, 'Mickey the world is changing fast, this war will accelerate the change. I wonder where we will end'. I spoke 'What do you mean by we, Sir?' 'I mean you and me, our class, our fraternity, our Biradari' — He used the word Biradari, Birader means brother in Persian and so Biradari means brotherhood.

Immediately on arrival in my room I noted this in my diary. He had a very sharp brain. And he could have a sharp tongue. I will give an example of it. At the end of January and early February we were in New Delhi with his Highness in Kashmir House; a huge mansion was built for the C-in-C field Marshal Lord Birdwood, but was discarded by him. He was an Indian Cavalryman belonging to Probys Horse (my youngest son's Regiment today). He condemned it for being located in a place not upto his rank or of his appointment, of a Number Two in India. His Highness and he were great friends and so His Highness bought the House and Birdwood built another Mansion facing the Viceroy's House (now Presidential Palace). Incidentally, all Princes lost their 'Houses' (Palaces) after the Independence — they had had enough use of them according to the new Paramount Power.

Now to get on with the more interesting part. His Highness had got Hesketh Hughes and Gerald Balding to play for him in the High handicaps in Durbar Polo Tournament in old Delhi, they had actually come to play for Bhopal. This is the place where the Durbar was held for His Majesty the King, Emperor George the Fifth in 1911 in which he declared Delhi to be the capital of India once again. Calcutta again became the capital of 'boxwallas' of the famous East India Company of Leadenhall, London.

He had a big House Party. The polo players and their wives and other friends plus of course all the staff and hangers on, the last, all the Princely order had, irrespective of how much and how long they had experienced the impact of the West. This is a habit, that stuck to them till the end. Delhi used to be at its best during this period, which lasted about 3 or 4 weeks. The mornings were spent in schooling or exercising one's ponies. After breakfast he either went out calling on his friends, all of them Army polo players gathered for the game they loved — Polo. I was invariably in attendance on this steeple chase in the same old two seater red Mercedes. It carried the leather box with His Highness's calling cards — 'Hari Singh — Kashmir'. And nothing else on it. The plan, the layout of the Bungalows in New Delhi, looks beautiful on paper, but it was most difficult to find the correct place. 'Round the corner' guidance took one round many corners and one found oneself completely lost in a corner. His Highness used to show remarkable patience on these ordeals: First time we started he ordered the Dograli chauffeur stuck in the dickey to find out if it was the right place. This poor man was from the wilds of Jammu Tawi. He would come back, fold his hands and trembling would invariably reply, *'Sarkar mem ne kuch kea main to kuch pale na pea Sarkar'* (The mem said something but I could make no head or tail of it). His Highness would say nothing to the man. He was a kind man, with the servants. But he did want to find out who allotted this man to him. Invariably I had to get out and tackle the Mems. She would either say, 'O, he is just having a wash, he won't be long', 'and when she told the person in the car was,'long' became very 'short' and out came a typical British officer found in the winter sun of India, riding his cavalry mount, patrolling the boundaries of the Indian Empire, or playing the manly game of Polo, part of his duty, on ponies for which he paid Rs. 7/8 a month as insurance. I managed to get this same concession sanctioned after partition in Pakistan after a great battle which left many scars. Rs. 7/8 today comes to almost 50 cents. So army horses are played Polo at a cost of less than 50 cents a month.

To the friend of His Highness again — He would come running saying 'O do come in and have a drink Your Highness'. His Highness would quickly make up his mind. It was either 'I can't stay long George, or John, or whatever it was, or I just came to drop my card, to tell you I am here,' and we would take our leave. These officers were mostly Lt. Cols. his age group. Those who had rubbed shoulders with him on the Polo ground and had developed friendship with the help of White

Horse, Black Dog or a Black Label. His Highness could be a very good friend. I noticed that we stayed for a while after His Highness had sighted the Mem Sahib. He was a shy man but a connoisseur of beauty. He enjoyed vivacious good looking women.

One could write a book about all this but let me get on with the story. Mornings were also spent playing bridge, with these same buddies and of course the Polo intrigues that went on could even take more serious turns, that sometimes it ended in breaking diplomatic relations between the two states. I am writing about the winter of 1938 when I had taken my long leave. The 'aim' at this tournament was to defeat the Jaipur rival who had annoyed some Highnesses by strutting about too much after winning all the major Polo Cups in England the year before. His Highness was backing his friend Mian's (Bhopal) side to whom he had promised, Hughes and Balding for the Durbar Cup-open. Bhopal had booked Bob Skeene for his No. 2, Kashmir was not competing in the Open Tournament but only in High handicap.

Every year there was a Polo Ball at the Viceregal Palace during this equestrian fortnight. The night the Polo Ball was fixed was also the beginning of the Delhi Horse Show day, inaugurated by the Viceroy, by driving in State from the Viceroy's House to Irwin Stadium, near Purana Qila. The day arrived and we all were to be with our mounts on time. I had instructions that I would accompany His Highness. We sat in the same red car and arrived before the horses were to be 'shown'. I had quite forgotten that the Viceroy was driving in state. His Highness's box was next to the Viceroy's on his right, but set back a bit. It was a cold day. There was bit of a breeze. His Highness and I found ourselves the only ones in our box, both protected from the cold with our Kashmiri camel-colour Polo long coats. Mine was a present from His Highness.

As we settled and started looking where Kashmir horses to be 'shown' were, we heard and later saw some police outriders. His Highness asked me who they were, I replied, I think some kind of Police Motor Cycle Show. When I saw the 'points' of the Viceroy's Body Guard, I said, 'This is the state entry of the Viceroy.' By then the leading section and then the leading escort troops were visible and then the state landau with Viceroy in the grey frock coat with the Vicereine on his left.

The sight had changed the mood of His Highness and I heard him say,'They cannot let us alone even on such occasions. They must poke their lance points in our bottoms here too'. I knew what the 'temperature' was and I was expecting a blow up any moment. By this time the Body Guard had formed up on the other side of the Landau to give the Royal Salute and the band struck the music of 'God Save the King'. The Viceroy took the salute by raising his top hat with the Vicereine by his side. His Highness was fidegetting in his seat half standing and half sitting and fuming. I felt a pull at my coat with 'Sit down' from His Highness but I kept standing at attention. He pulled again. This time with 'You slave'. This annoyed me a bit, as I thought he was being childish. The whole of the horse-shoe shaped area was standing. The Viceroy and Vicereine came up the red carpet faced the guard after climbing the steps to their box and bowed to the right and left to the audience and turned to take their seats. They saw His Highness and smiled and he half came up in his seat and then sat down. His moods changed unexpectedly. Any small thing could spark the change.

He took his gold cigarette case out and lit a cigarette, tapping the cigarette more than usual before lighting it. I knew him well enough to know that now he would say something; he did,'Why did you stand so long' I was ready and snapped 'Because I am an Officer of the Indian Army Sir.' He knew me well enough to know that I was annoyed. I knew that he would now start making up. He spoke,'But it

was too long. It looked ridiculous'. I replied, 'Sir, on the left is the Box of the C-in-C, General Casells and he happens to be the Colonel of my Regiment. Next to him is his son and then his ADC, Kenneth Boles, both of them know me well. I sat down when they all sat down'. He said nothing but in the meantime Viceroy's ADC approached our box with a note in his hand. He gave it to me, it was for H.H. it was from the Vicereine. It read, 'You naughty boy, see you at the ball tonight.' And soon she was seen looking towards us waving to H.H. He bowed sitting in his seat and gave a mild wave with his right hand.

Another — incident — the same night was at the ball. I had been told by Uncle Mehboob that His Highness wanted me to accompany him. I had my own invitation too. The dinner was served in the big formal dining room with about 80 people in the seats. We were all formally dressed. His Highness in his light blue brocade Achkan with all his medals and orders and wearing the light blue sash of G.C.S.I. Order. I wore my regimental Mess Kit, a light and dark blue affair with braiding and appulets in silver. It was one of the smartest combinations. The ball was to start at ten o'clock. His Highness was the Senior Prince in town and so had to take the Vicereine on the floor and get the ball rolling. At nine-thirty I looked at my watch. His Highness was watching, but said nothing. After 15 minutes I looked at it again. He spoke 'Don't panic there is plenty of time'. At ten he got up; everyone got up. I joined him at the door. He placed his already tied turban on his head, in scarlet Dograli fashion, it was a made up affair, with the late Maharaja Partap Singh's miniatures in colours, surrounded with diamonds, beautifully mounted as a platinum clasp, with two strings of beautifully matched sparkling pearls holding it in position round the turban. The whole effect being of taste rather than ostentatiousness. Having tried it and then examined himself in a long mirror in the hall, he asked the attendant to place it back in its case of beautiful crocodile hide — light helmet case. He turned to me and said, 'Mickey I am afraid you will have to hold this in the car. I hope you don't mind. It may be too much for the man at the back'. The good old (new actually) red two seater had been replaced by a long bonnet shaped Hispano Suisa; it was a cold windy misty night. The hood was up. On top of his Achkan he had put on his favourite Kashmir polo coat. I threw my cloak over my shoulders and my side cap on my head. In the dickie went the attendant who had an overcoat over his khaki woollen coat. He had his yellow turban on his head. He had no canvas hood. I felt sorry for him. His Highness managed to get in somehow, the hood had made this operation quite an obstacle. But His Highness was in a good mood. He settled behind the wheel, put on his fur gloves and the car roared out of the gates nearly killing the sentry, leaving white smoke behind in the cold.

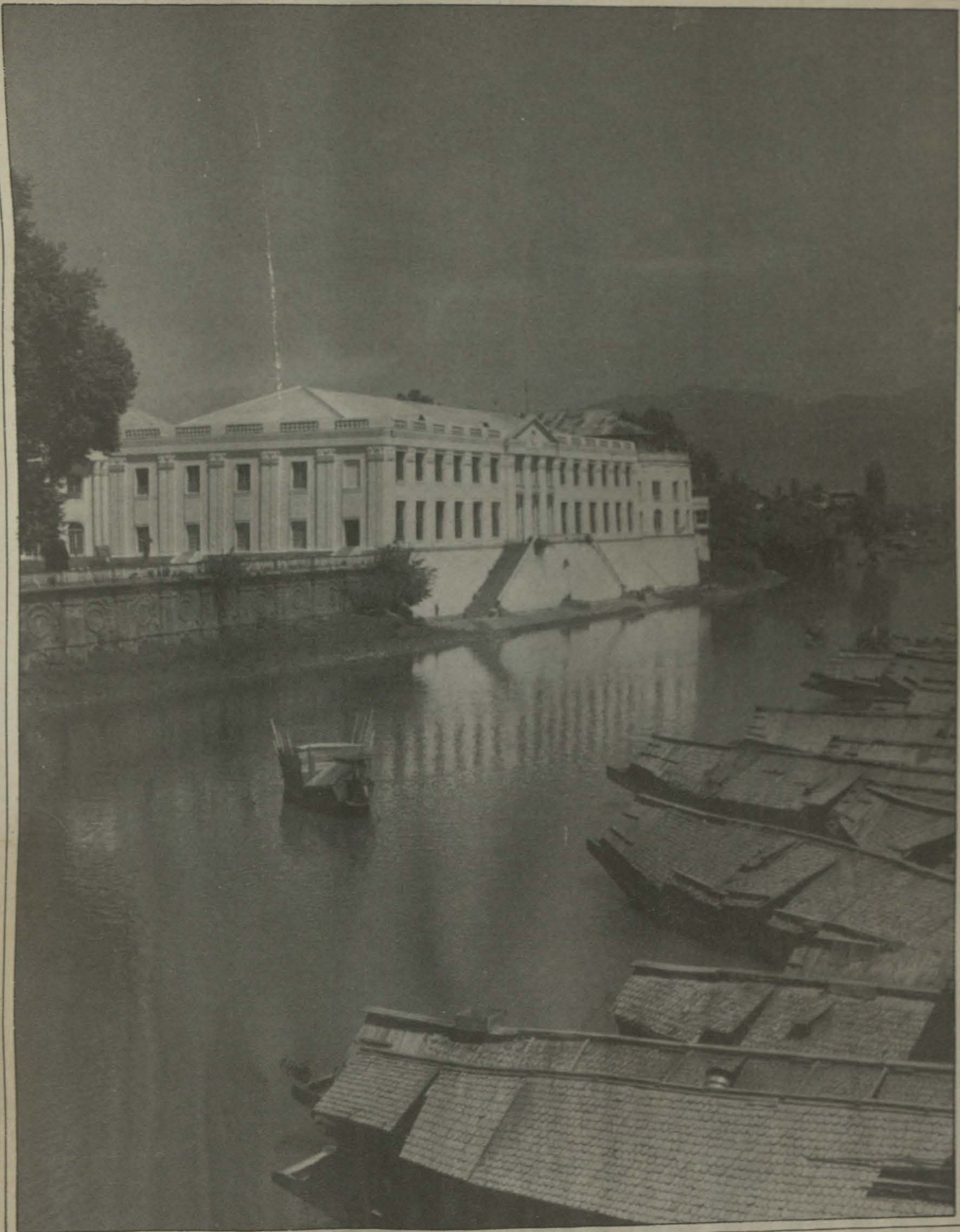
Kashmir House was located on one of the main avenues between the India Gate (with the statue of King George the Fifth — now no longer there) and Safdarjung. His Highness knew the way. 'Sorry for this cramping for you Mickey with the box on your lap, but the idiot at the back could have done anything with it. 'No problem Sir' I had said. By now we had come to India Gate and were swinging left (south) on to the King's way, when a huge black Rolls crossed us, driven by an English chauffeur. This sparked the mood. His Highness asked, 'Who is that?' 'I can't read from here Sir'. He pressed the accelerator and I read the plate at the back. 'It is Jaipurs'. The car was empty. 'These slaves. Can't they find a man of their own to drive the car for them?' was His Highness's outburst.' He tried to pass him. But the man at the wheel in the Rolls was having none of it. A Rolls was not going to be passed by a mere two seater (Hispano Suiza) convertible driven by a native. Before I knew both cars were travelling at what seemed a thousand miles an hour past the main square with the big fountains leading up the rise to Viceroy's House

through the broad drive with the beautiful Secretariat Building, on the right and left could be seen approaching at a fast speed. I said nothing but clung tightly to the Crown Box. His Highness's temper must have cleared his head because as they approached neck to neck His Highness gave him the slip, went round the wrong way, making full use of his more agile car. The chauffeur must have read the number plate, after that he stopped chasing us and we soon entered the private entrance portico and he turned towards the public entrance.

We got down without much ceremony. We were late. His Highness adjusted his Dastar (headdress) on his head. I took my side cap off and our long coats were taken away by the Viceregal Chobdars (stick bearers) and His Highness and I walked solemnly through a carpeted gallery towards the ball room. The music could be heard. We entered by the left large door. The Viceregal party was in the centre, to our right from where we were. He looked around, seeing us, when His Highness noticed that my loop was again undone. He was rather particular about these things, and we were inclined to open our jackets, over our embroidered pale blue waistcoat, to show off the delicate work on it. He had hooked the loop before we got into the car. He noticed this unhooked and said, 'There, you have done it again' and started hooking it in view of everyone, who had by now noticed his arrival. While he was doing it, I heard steps over my left shoulder, as I was facing His Highness who had his hands occupied in the hooking process and then heard 'Your Highness you are forty minutes late', and immediately went the reply from His Highness *"Tum ko yehan ka thekadar kis ne bana dia"* (who has made you — (in rude form) — the contractor of this place'. And I stood stunned and surprized because I knew that these two and Nawab Sahib of Palanpur, Talay Mohammad Khan, were great buddies. But there was a little touch of jealousy with Bikaner because he had been representative of the Princes of India at the Treaty of Versailles. And His Highness of Kashmir though a member of Churchill's war cabinet had been beaten by a seventeen (17) gunner. But knowing these special relations a bit I was soon rid of my surprise and shock.

The hooking had been accomplished and I saw His Highness Bikaner towering over me in his black Achkan with his breast crowded with medals and stars and the sash of the Grand Commander of the Star of India (G.C.S.I) with a pale blue turban of a Rajput, adorning his magnificent tall figure with a turned up moustache. No other words were exchanged, thank God. As Bikaner turned on his left heel and walked away an English voice was heard from our right, of none other than the Commander-in-Chief General Sir Robert Cassels. 'Hullo your Highness. Come and have a drink'. In the distance could be seen the bar of the VVIP's. His Highness moved to shake his hand. 'Hullo Bob. How are you ? Let me introduce Nawabzada Sher Ali Khan of Pataudi, a Captain of your regiment.' The C-in-C was kind enough to stretch out and shake my hand and say, "O yes, you were at Sandhurst with my ADC Kenneth Boles. He has often talked about you". Before any more was said His Highness spoke to me, 'Let's synchronize our watches. Please be here in an hour's time'. His Highness and the C-in-C walked away to the right, and I made my way towards the younger generation, mostly polo players — still slightly dazed by what I had just witnessed and heard. An experience that has remained fresh, even today, after a lapse of half-a-century. I accepted his moods but never tried to understand them. Like I accept when I am told that we live in a galaxy of 400 million planets. I do not get depressed when I don't understand such statements by scientists. The behaviour of rulers was sometimes beyond understanding. They were all tarred by the same brush. They were eccentric to the point of being neurotic.

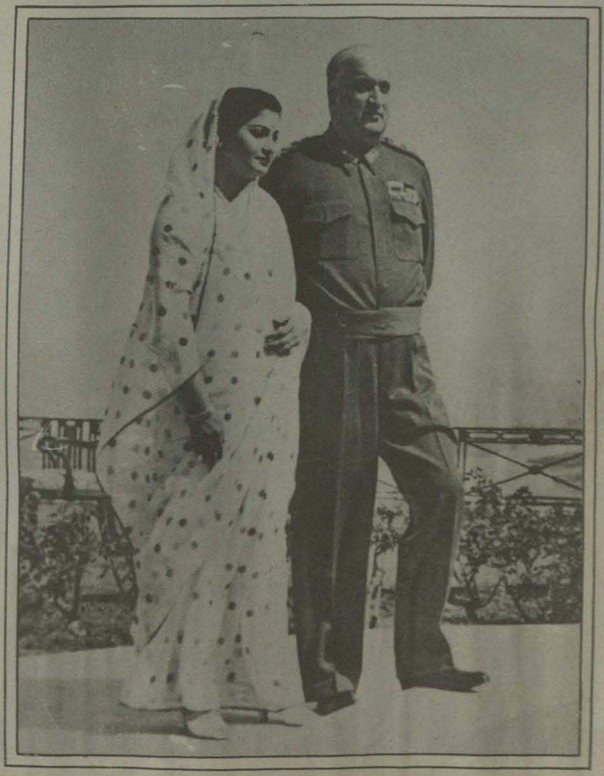
I have learnt to be grateful for the Being's blessings, whom I have accepted without seeing. I was neither a scientist nor the Maharaja of Kashmir. He was kind



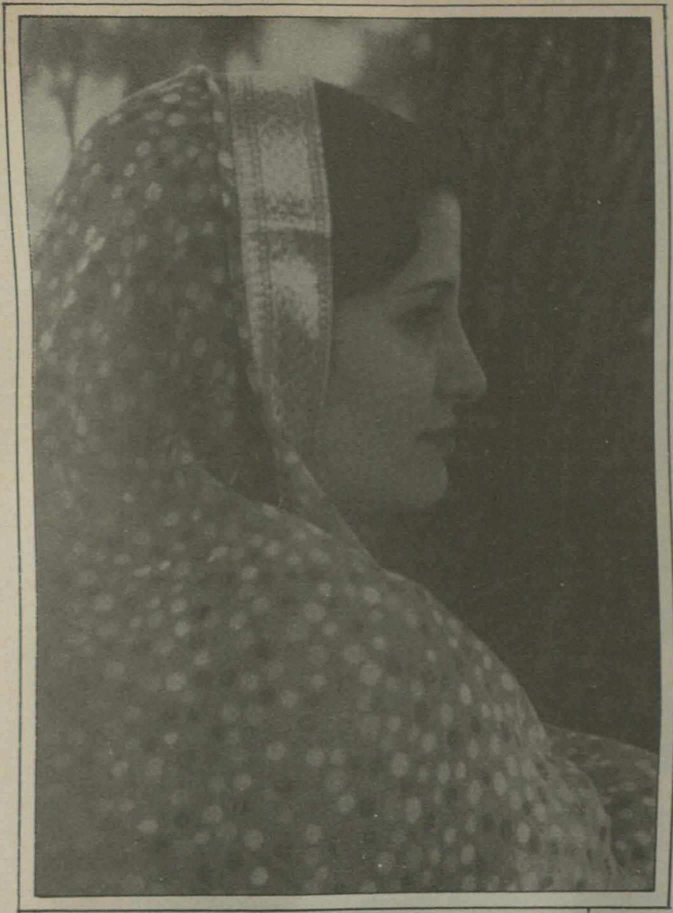
The Old Palace in Srinagar



Maharaja Ghulab Singh of Jammu and Kashmir with his Court



Their Highness the Maharaja and Maharani of Kashmir Palace (Ghulab Bhawan) Terrace Srinagar



Her Highness Kashmir - near a Pine Tree in Ghulab Bhawan Palace Srinagar (Picture by Author 1938)



Dr. Karan Singh now Maharaja of Kashmir when I first met him, picture given to the Author by Maharani Sahiba - his mother



Their Highness the present Maharani and Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir 1982

The Amar Singh Club, Srinagar



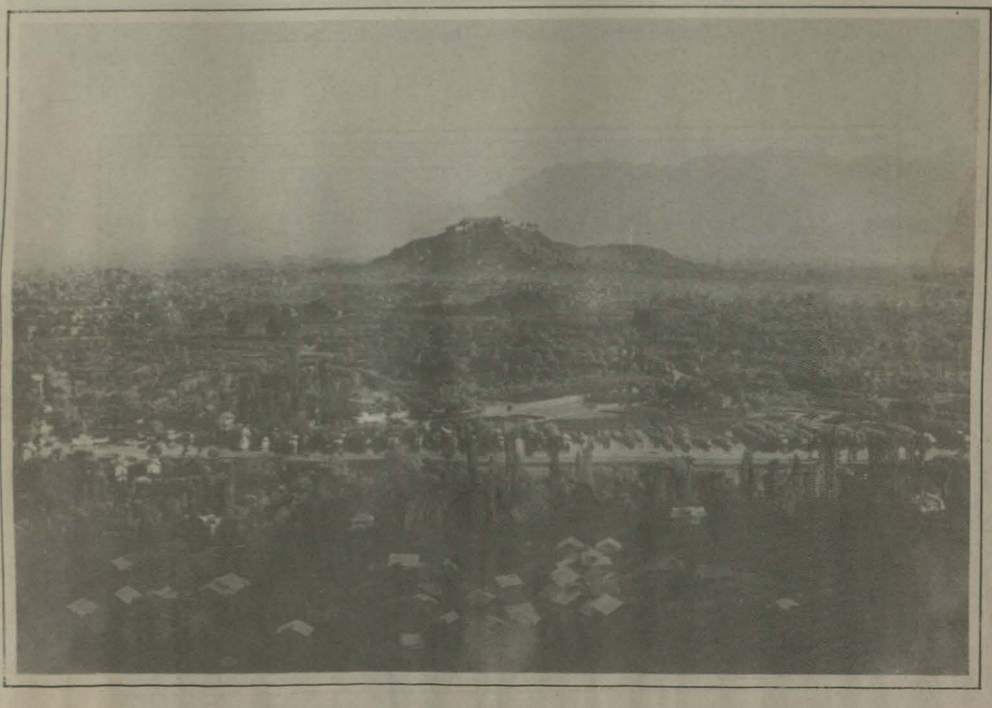
Tennis match Pithapuram Vs Amar Singh Club 1939

Standing: Uncle Mahboob(1), Prince Basalat Jah of Hyderabad(2), Sir Abdus Samad Khan of Rampur (Home Minister)(3), Self(4), Ayesha(5), Baby Kamal(6), Heskey Baig(7).

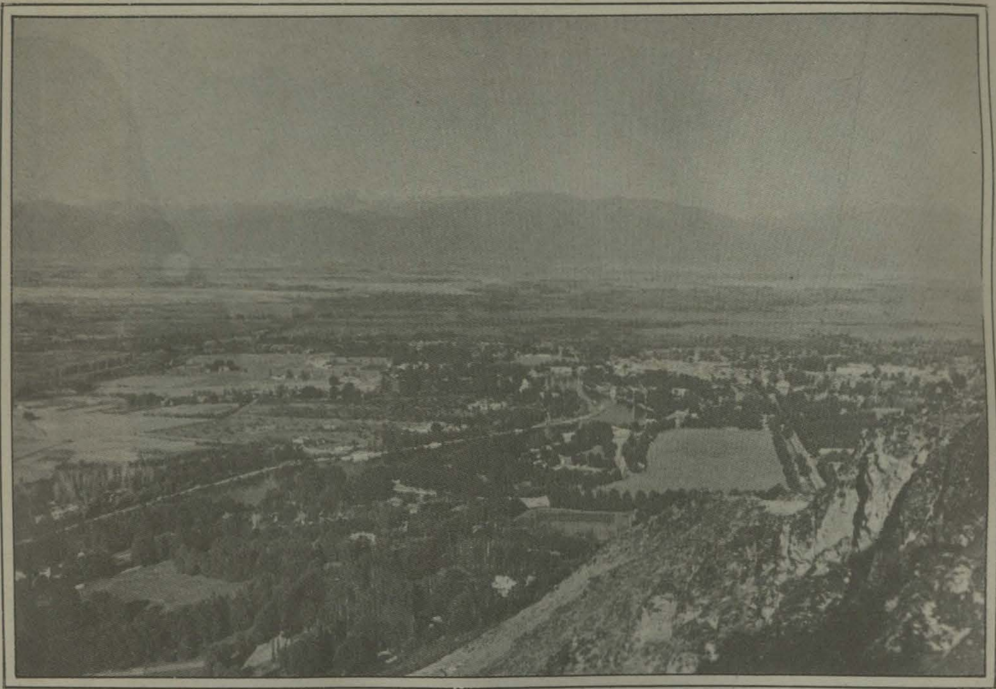
Sitting: Princess Nafees Basalat Jah(8), Her. H. Cooch Bahar(9), Prime Minister of Kashmir Gopalasowami Ayyangar(10).



The Banihal Pass - May 1938



Hariparbat - Srinagar The Jhelum River with its Boots



From Takhat-i-Sulaiman The polo grounds below



Polo ground Jammu - Winter 1940 Bilty, Digby, Tiger (Dr. Karan Singh)



Self - 'Showing' Tiny - Badami Bagh - Srinagar 1939



The Prince of Bahrain at Polo - The Sheikh and His Highness



The Sheikh Admiring 'Maitland'



The Horse Parade



Maitland and Sheikh



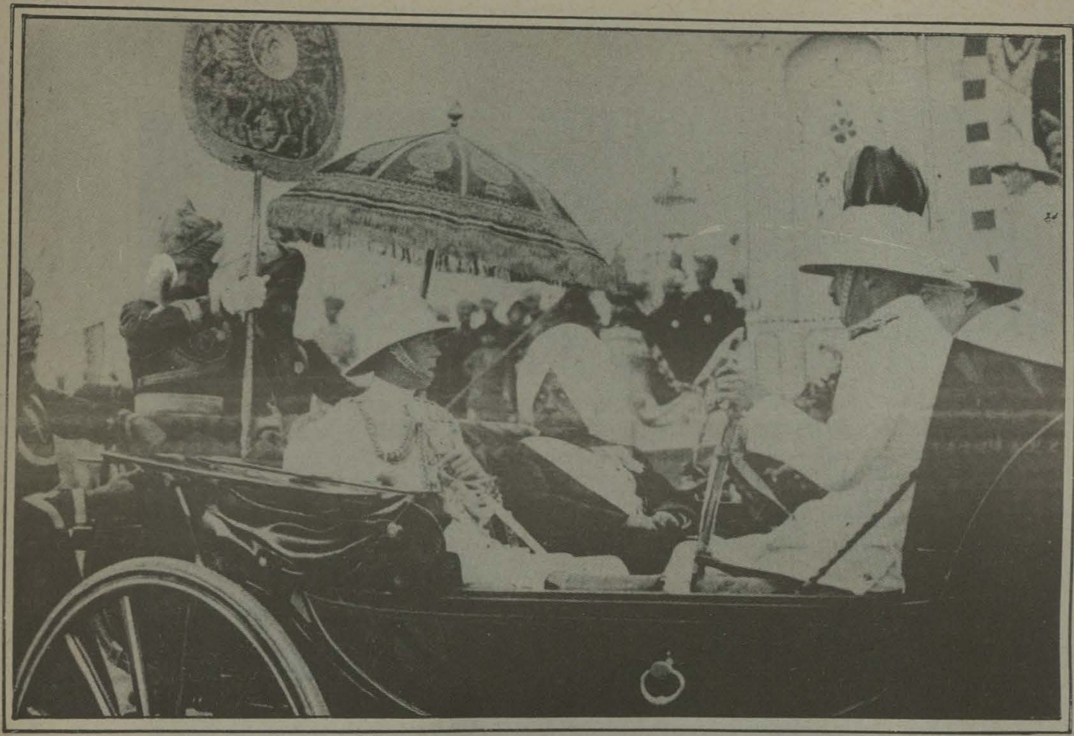
The Sheikh Admiring Kashmir Polo Ponies



Churchill's War Cabinet: Standing fourth from left is Maharaja Hari Singh and on his right is Malik Sir Feroze Khan Noon the India's High Commissioner in London



At the cenotaph with H.M. King George the Vth the Maharaja of Kashmir then Patiala and Nawanagar on his right, the Agha Khan is on extreme left



H. R. H the Prince of Wales in the state Landau with his highness Sir Pertab Singh of Jamu & Kashmir.

Sir Abdus Samad Khan, Rampur
(Home Minister - Kashmir)

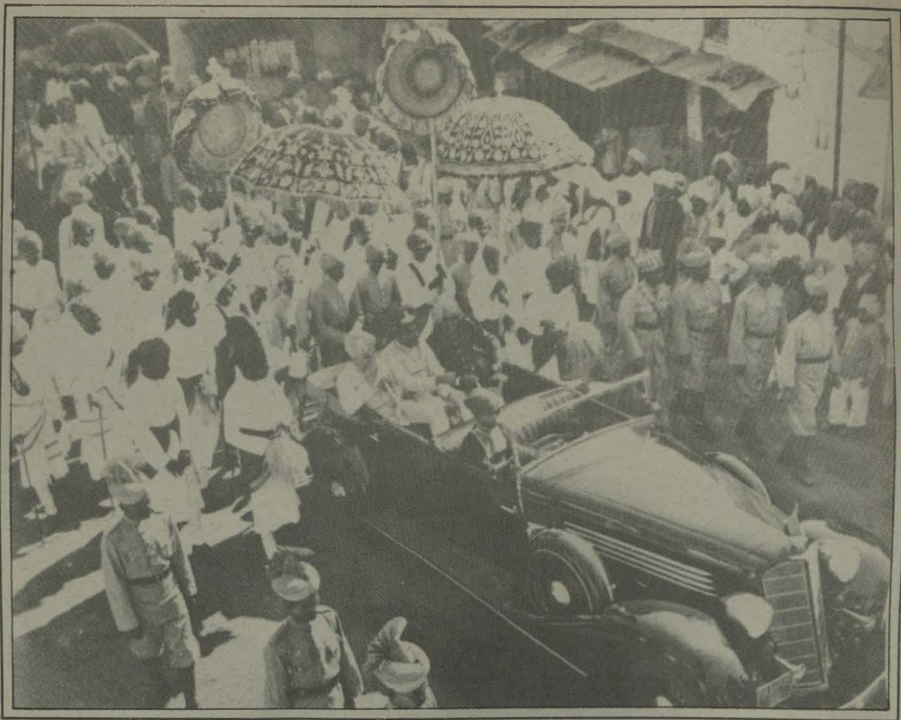




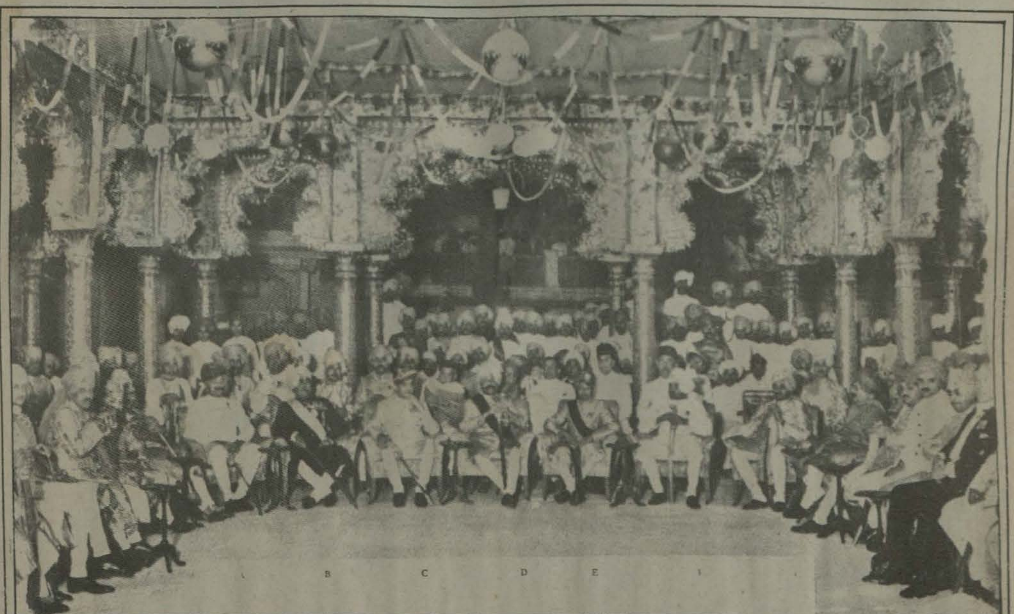
Nawab Taley Mohammad Khan, the popular ruler of Palanpur from 1918 to 1950. Great friend of H.H. Kashmir



A panther shot in the hills of Palanpur by the young Valiahad, Iqbal Muhammad Khan (now the Nawab) with his father, the late Nawab



Nawab Taley Mohammad Khan drives his guest, Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir (right) through the streets of Palanpur 1936 on his left is seated the Maharaja of Bikanir - the three friends.



A princely wedding gathering Danta(A) Bikanir(B), Kashmir(C) Palanpur(D) Jodhpur(E) Porbandar(F), and Jusdan(G)

to me. That was enough. Accept the friend as he is to you and do not expect him to be the same to everyone else. This I learnt later. I often wondered if His Highness understood me. Did he have the time. Did he care enough to try. An incident which happened a couple of days after the Viceregal Ball, throws light of this statement.

He conveyed a message through Her Highness and my wife that he would like me to come to him, to replace Uncle Mehboob who was thinking of going back to Hyderabad, his home state. I gave a reply to Her Highness, 'I would be honoured to be of any service to His Highness. But I was a career soldier, and wanted to earn my profession so that when the British left, and leave they must one day, people like me would be there to help in taking over. His Highness could ask for services for such time until he could find a suitable substitute for uncle Khosro-jung'. She listened to me carefully. Smiled. And said, 'I will do that'. I took my leave.

The next morning she met me downstairs in the lounge and told me that she had conveyed my reply. 'I hope he was not annoyed', I had said. 'No, but a bit disappointed at first' and then said, 'you see, that is why I want him near me.' She paused and then said, 'I knew you would say that'. I was happy that these two friends were not upset. More than that I was happy that they knew me. His Highness never mentioned the subject to me, ever. I knew he wouldn't. I knew the man and understood his mannerisms. A kind man. Highly intelligent. Very shy which people took for arrogance. A very good and generous friend. What more can one want. God has been so kind to me. I have believed in HIM from my childhood. I think HE has appreciated that. And when HE is happy, everyone is happy with you. This I also learnt at an early age. Things I wanted came easily to me. Things I could not get and wanted, turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

I must move on to the game of Polo which at its longest lasts an hour or more but the preparation for it starts weeks earlier and its results remembered for an even longer period.

The main rivals in the big Cup were Bhopal and Jaipur. They had both reached the finals. Bhopal had a tough game with Chicken Walford of 17/21st Lancer's side — the famous regiment of the 'Charge of the Light Brigade', made immortal by Tennyson's poetry: 'all that was left of them, left of six hundred' — they wore the badge of a skull with or 'Glory' on it. Bhopal had lamed three of their best horses. That was serious. His Highness had just come down to the entrance hall and was chatting to me about a horse when the ADC came up to me and said His Highness Bhopal was on the line and wanted to speak to me. I excused myself and went to the phone. He wanted to see me and could I come as early as possible. I told His Highness, he was curious to know; I could read that from his face, but said nothing as his Bridge partners had arrived. 'Let me know when you come back' was all he said.

H.H. Bhopal always stayed at Travencore House, which was not far from us. His Highness was relaxing, puffing his Huqa (hubble bubble), with his cronies around him. I made my Salaam, he got up and embraced me, asked me to sit by his side, and did not waste time. 'Sher Mian we need your help.' Before I could speak he continued, 'We have lamed three of our best ponies, including Brown Sherry.' Pause, I spoke, 'Yes it was a tough game, 17/21st were very well mounted. And Gerald Balding is not easy to mount'. I knew what was needed from me, horses from Kashmir stables. He did not have to say more. 'I will do my best. Luckily for you we lost yesterday in our handicap match'.

I got up, 'I must go. I hope he is winning in Bridge. I will get back to you, Sir.' He got up. Pleased. Smiled and kissed me on the forehead.

There are so many instances, about His Highness that would show that he had his moods, could be angry to the point of cruelty, mental more than physical, but he could also suddenly change and be kind and even sorry if he had done something which he should not have done. I will give an instance...... A polo game was in progress at Srinagar on No. 1 ground. I was sitting with him. They were medium chakkars for the new ponies, who were being put through the paces of varying speeds. The gate of the ground, facing the Nedo's Hotel could be seen. A trainer had suddenly lost his patience with one of the new ponies, and had whipped his horse, which put off His Highness 'look at that b... who is he?' As I looked for the A.D.C., who may have known the man, he must have, 'And what is that station wagon doing on the other side of the ground? Who are they? Find out? Throw them out?' An A.D.C. was instructed to do the needful. He trotted off to the station wagon and was seen talking to some Europeans, later on the station wagon moved and left the ground and the gatekeeper closed the gate. On return it was reported that they were young Army Officers on leave. 'You see how ill mannered they are..., just because they are white... and think this whole...East is theirs'. I kept my silence. I noticed that I was now left alone with His Highness. The others had the habit of avoiding him when his temper was high. The chukkar had finished, the other side was taking up their position, the ball was thrown in. His Highness packed up his cigarette case, opened it carefully, pulled a cigarette out and lit it with care. He always lit it like this. He was very punctilious, to the point of being finicky. Then he turned round to me and said, 'It's time for tea, isn't it?' I got up, as no one was near at hand. The butler moved towards me. He guessed what was required and soon the tea trays started arriving. His Highness usually returned some of the calls by asking them to tea at polo. But there was no call that day. He addressed me, after I had taken my seat again 'Call the others, to join. What are they scared of.' The usual crowd was there, officers who were sportsmen, body-guard commander who was usually there, a tall fair handsome, middle aged Dogra from a village near Jammu. His Highness like him but also bullied him. I will relate an instance later. The bad mood had gone and he was talking to his officers, this is the time when he gave his audience to such officers, a senior one incharge of 'Shikar Khana', a friend of mine from Kotah, who had been asked how the population of Red Bears and Markhors had grown and how the Salmon and the Trout were doing. When would he like to arrange camp for him. Then there was the Forest Conservator who was also a friend of His Highness. He pulled his leg about how many trees he had felled without permission. Then there was the class of 'Durbarees' who held no specific posts, they were really 'hangers on' to the naked eye but were His Highness's personal 'informers', nothing to do with the official intelligence, personnel who came under the Minister of Interior. Their juicy stuff was whispered in the privacy of the private apartments. Quite a bit of it was cooked up to please him — this of course would be termed wrong intelligence anywhere else. But I am talking of the princely states.

I being the member of the elite fraternity had many advantages but had to be more careful in case in my enthusiasm, I over-stepped the mark. This was learnt by observation, there was no school of instructions for it. I had the honour and the trust to be able to go in to the Zanana and see Her Highness, whenever she summoned me or if I wanted to see her, usually on an errand from His Highness, or to practise my photography. I was one of the very few who could photograph her. With all the intimacy and privilege I had to be doubly careful. State palace intrigues were famous and some have written books on them. But Kashmir lived an apparent clean and sporting life. The Mr. 'A' affair had taught His Highness a good lesson: he was very discreet. Sir John Simmon the man who headed the Simmon

Commission in 1927 was the 'Silk' who addressed His Highness, then Prince Hari Singh, as 'an abject wretch', in the famous Mr. 'A' scandal case when a British Major had tried to blackmail His Highness. It all worked out right in the end but it cost 150,000 Pounds (then) and left a mark on His Highness. He never got over it completely and in bursts of temper, his attitude was coloured by that experience. I will relate an incident later.

The readers will be curious, I am sure, especially those who have had no experience of these princely courts, that I keep talking of His Highness and there is no mention of Her Highness. Well in the East the wife had a peculiar and special position. I am talking of 30's, more than half a century back. Conditions are changing everyday, a woman is the Prime Minister of Britain and what more she is the leader of the Conservative Party. In the ancient nation of India there has been a woman Prime Minister. Sri Lanka has had a woman Prime Minister too. So things are changing. But it is interesting that even in enlightened homes, women educated and belonging to progressive backgrounds accepted to be second and third wives.

Her Highness was not the first wife. But she was the youngest and did manage to produce an heir for him to the Gaddi of Jammu and Kashmir, the present Dr. Karan Singh, a philosopher, and author of many books and papers, a distinguished statesman, and my 'nephew.'

His tutor was Mr. Ritchie, my old tutor at Aitchison College, Lahore. An international hockey player, but a stubborn Scotsman. He left in 1940 on a difference of where he and his wife were to be accommodated in Srinagar in the summer. His Highness had invited his friend the Nawab of Palanpur for the summer, and he was to stay in the house named after him, Talay Manzil, where Ritchies had been staying for the past couple of years. I was visiting Jammu. His Highness asked me to intervene. But it was of no use. Mrs. Ritchie has made her plans to return for the last time and stay in Talay Manzil. Mr. Ritchie thought it was unfair to change the accommodation at the last minute and dug his toes in. I had to make three trips to Mr. Ritchie as an emissary but the final reply was a 'no', after receiving the latest cable from Mrs. Ritchie who has now cancelled her return and asked her husband to come back forthwith. This meant a breach in contact as there was another year to go. All my diplomacy failed. His Highness, I have to admit, was very far and surprisingly patient. Mr. Ritchie left with grace and the remaining year was condoned. Mr. Ritchie had lived in India a few decades and had himself developed a bit of 'Hut — Zid' (stubbornness) and was forgetting the three 'Huts' proverbial of this land of the East, 'Balak Hut' (child's stubbornness), 'Tirya Hut' (woman's stubbornness) and 'Raj Hut' (ruler's stubbornness).

When I met His Highness at the usual bridge party at the palace swimming pool, a beautiful large covered Grecian type of affair, he seemed to have forgotten about the morning's irksome atmosphere and was his jovial self, at this cooking competition evening. Now this was a kind of competition that was typical of the Kashmir Court. I can't remember anything like this anywhere else. A menu was decided by His Highness after consultations with Her Highness, about the only time, or one of the rare times, where she was consulted. The total items were usually 8 or 9 dishes. The cooking pots, with their cookers, usually an angeethi, an open cooker which contained charcoal, was kept going by replacing coal, were all lined up. Then there was the big table with all the necessary ingredients for cooking the items from Pulao to Kebabs, at least two kinds, seekh and shami, then a vegetable dish of at least 2 or 3 different kinds of vegetables, then dals of at least 2 or 3 kinds, then a curry dish of chicken or mutton and both mixed with mince etc. All these things were laid out at the side of the pool near the bridge tables. Before the

game started all of us had to draw from a Silver Polo Trophy, the dish that we had to cook. The names of the dishes and the competitors were then given to Her Highness. She presided over a different bridge table where people of my talent amused her. We usually finished up playing 'Poker', with limits on bidding. It was great fun, one played and cooked. Each cooker had an attendant in white uniform with a yellow turban. The Goanese butler with assistants waited near His Highness. I hadn't a clue about cooking. But there was a method in this madness too. Her Highness could not help because she was the judge. But when His Highness saw her talking to the attendants invariably, I heard his voice, 'Mickey what did you draw'. 'Pulao Sir'. It was not an easy item to cook properly, and required lot of timing, when to put in water and when to put the lid off. When to put the meat, etc. His Highness knew most of the attendants by name, they were actually cooks. He would then shout for his favourite one and quietly tell him to teach me. It was easy sailing after that, this man, Kishan was his name, did the rest. But there was 'durbari', courtiership, all along — the best and the worst. The worst one had to be eaten by the person who cooked it. This of course never happened but the morsel was forced down the throat once. His Highness if he was in a good mood, kept asking while still playing his hand, 'how is it going' and I had to get up and ask the man, and then go upto His Highness and tell him. He would then give the instructions to the man what to do. Incidentally His Highness was a connoisseur of food and a very good cook. He loved good food. It was very exciting when the bell sounded on orders from Her Highness. That meant that all cooking had to stop as the time was up. Some asked for more time but it was seldom given. Her Highness used to taste every dish and declared who cooked the best and who the worst. I was never in either of these categories. I asked her once when the Pulao was praised by all, why she had not declared it as the winner. 'Because you did not cook it and neither did His Highness, it was my cook who cooked it'. 'But everyone is praising it'. She cut me short. 'Because they know that His Highness had had a hand in it. They are all 'khushamadis' (psychophants). Such was the daily routine by which we amused ourselves after a game of polo, on perhaps the best kept ground in the whole of India, second only to Srinagar grounds. There are so many instances I could relate, but it would require a book to itself. I am relating only those that bring out the character of the person I am writing about. On the same ground where he had the young British Officers thrown out, he had a parade of the Kashmir Polo ponies, eighty in all, perhaps the finest collection in the world, belonging to one stable, in honour of the Sheikh of Bahrain who was calling on His Highness, at the polo ground. We had a small local tournament on and His Highness was playing, with Phulel, (one of his ADC's), uncle Mehboob, His Highness and myself. It was quite a good game but His Highness was taking it easy and therefore, hard for three of us. We won the game, we had to. His Highness was in a good mood. I was asked to sit near the Sheikh because I knew a smattering of Arabic, having learnt it for my appointment as Commander of Muscat Levies, an appointment which never materialized because of the war. On His Highness taking his seat, the Sheikh congratulated him on his play. His Highness bowed and took the compliment with a smile. During tea the Sheikh quietly said in half Arabic and half English, is it possible to see the best polo player in the world play again and some of his wonderful selected ponies. His Highness blushed and said *'Bhai is ko kaho ke me hargiz best polo player nahie hun'*. (Please tell him I am not the best polo player in the world). 'What about the ponies part?' His Highness was obviously pleased with the Arab Prince and said of course we will have a parade of ponies and an exhibition polo match, next polo day, day-after tomorrow. 'Would that suit the Prince?' This was too much for me in Arabic but the colonial officer

who was sitting besides us came to the rescue and whispered it to the Prince. The Prince got up and bowed his acceptance. His Highness was pleased. 'Mickey where is Mehboob (Nawab Khusrojang), his Minister in Waiting, you had better get busy with the arrangements'. After the Prince had left, His Highness got into his favourite two seater convertible Mercedes, with me by his side, and left for the Palace. He lit a cigarette, an indication of being relaxed and passed a quiet remark 'Nice fellow this Sheikh. What do you think of him? He certainly knows his Arab manners'. I said, 'I know what you mean'. The Sheikh had obviously been well briefed.

The 'Day After', the polo grounds were in festive mood. The state brass band was playing and the pipers were marching up and down on the No. 2 ground, when we entered the gate from the Bund side. On arrival at the No. 1 Pavilion the National Anthem was played. His Highness shook hands with the Arab Prince and the parade of horses started led by the Commandant of Bodyguard. His Highness had just bought 'Maitland' at Tattersalls, London, for a record price. When the shining bay came in front of us I pointed him out to the Prince. He took the hint. He was a seasoned diplomat. He asked if he could go upto the horse. His Highness said, 'Why not'. The march past stopped and I was told to accompany the Prince. I went with my camera. I took some pictures which I have in my albums especially when the Prince put his fist between the jaws of the horse and pressed the wind pipe. He said that the Arabs considered this important, the broader the gap of the jaw bones the better the windpipe, and the wind. It was understandable. I explained this to His Highness on return to the pavilion.

After the parade the exhibition match started. It was a fast game ând His Highness was not fit. So he said that I was to explain this to the Prince, which I did and so only two chukkars were played. After His Highness came to tea from the dressing room, the Prince remarked that his life dream had been realized. After the officer had translated this, we anxiously waited to know what it was. His Highness looked at me. I took the hint and politely asked what it was. The Prince without a wink said, 'To have seen His Highness play polo. He put his head down and smiled. He lit a cigarette, and then spotted some people sitting on the other side of the polo ground. He asked who they were. He was told by one of the ADC's that they were British Officers on leave. 'Why don't they come this side. Ask them and give them some tea'. I looked at the ADC who shrugged his shoulders and marched across the ground and was soon marching back with them. I thought I better take advantage of the mood and so I got up and met them at the touch line and brought them to His Highness, who got up, came down the steps and shook hands with them. When I had got to him the ADC had warned me that they were the same ones he had thrown out of the ground. That was our His Highness Hari Singh.

Now came the climax of the evening. The Prince who by now had guessed that I was close to His Highness, said to me with a bowed head in a whisper 'Prince, I have one more request. If you could ask His Highness, I shall be most grateful. I have never shot a Red Bear'. He must have noticed the expression of dismay on my face. His Highness who was watching all this with amusement, asked me, 'What is it Mickey?' I replied in Urdu *'Yeh zara mushkil request hai'* (this is a difficult request). *'Kiya hai batao'* (what is it, tell me). So I told him. Typical of the man, when in good mood, came the reply 'What does it matter if he gets a bear or two, certainly it can be arranged'. The prince obviously understood English more than he would admit. He go up and again gave a deep bow. His Highness was pleased 'Not at all, a pleasure'. He waved to the officer incharge of the Shikarkhana shooting arrangements and gave him the necessary instructions. And then suddenly took leave. 'Forgive me Prince but I must change or I'll catch a cold'. And

with a 'Come on Mickey' we left for the Palace. His Highness was quiet. I knew him well enough not to talk first. After we had started the climb to the palace drive, he remarked 'I hope he gets a bear. But there is a lot of climbing to be done, he is a big heavy man.' He paused and then as we drove into the portico of the palace he said, 'Thank you Mickey for bringing those officers to me. It was very intelligence of you'. I said nothing and just nodded my head.

This was the man who was considered arrogant. He was basically a shy man. He was a lonely man. He was the only son of his father, Amar Singh. He had inherited his Gaddi from his Uncle. It would be surprising to some to know that many of his personal friends were Muslims. His ADC's were mixed, but his Minister-in-Waiting, and best friend was a Muslim, Nawab Khusrojang known to his friends as Mehboob (meaning beloved). On Fridays, we had to have early lunch because, 'My boys have to go for their Friday prayers', is what this Hindu Prince used to say. In 1946 when Pandit Nehru threatened to come to Kashmir and propagate the case of the Congress in the state, His Highness made it clear that if he crossed the river Jhelum at Kohala into his territory, he would be stopped. And when Panditji defied him, he was arrested and sent back. There was no love lost between His Highness and the Congress. He avoided politicians, be they Muslims or Hindus. He was fully conscious of the fact that his subjects were mostly Muslims and he was very careful that harmony prevailed in the main land. I heard him often on this subject advising and instructing his Ministers. The Prime Minister was a Hindu but the others were Muslims. I knew them all well. The Home Minister was my father-in-law Sir Abdul Samad.

The reader would appreciate that through the passage of time, I had come close to the family. I was the only one who could go into the Zanana without permission. His heir apparent, his only child from Her Highness Tara Katochi, named Karan Singh (now Dr. Karan Singh) the renowned author of many books and papers was tutored by my old tutor Mr. Ritchie. I would like to feel that I came in somewhere, in his choice. Karan Singh's pet name is Tiger. My name is Sher, which means Tiger. And a number of friends call me Tiger. His Highness neither addressed me as Tiger nor as Sher, but as Mickey. A number of his friends had asked him why. He had replied, it suits him and me. Once I had asked Her Highness why he does that. She had replied that she had asked him the same question and he had replied, "Don't you like it? Karan is a lovely name and 'K' of Karan fitted the 'K' of Kashmir". She never called me Mickey. I was always Sher to her. This again gives, an insight to the character of this very complicated man. The only other person who sometimes called me Mickey was Monarch — His Highness Jodhpur, his great buddy. I never questioned him addressing me as Mickey. I knew him too well.

While I am on this theme, I will relate two incidents. Her Highness was a charming person. She was the 4th wife of His Highness, selected from the banks of the Bias river in Kangra District in Hamachal Pardesh, in the hope that she would produce a male-heir. She was an attractive woman to the point of being a beautiful one. Her eyes smiled more than her lips or mouth. She was a Katoch Dogra. I once took a picture of her beside a pine tree in the palace at Srinagar. She signed it as 'Katochi'. I asked her why. Her reply was very interesting 'Because it is my tribal identity.' 'But your name is Tara' I had said. 'Yes I know but Taras (stars) come and go and are unstable. I find stability in Katochi. Village wisdom is indeed wisdom rooted to mother earth and is not a Cosmic Affair.' She had an inquisitive mind. She was off guard to only a few. I think I was one of them. I remember her asking once 'Why do you call this hill that overlooks the polo ground Takhat-e-Sulaiman, there is an old Buddhist temple there'. 'Yes Apaji it was built by Ashoka's

son Jaloka, who reigned about 220 B.C. and part of it was turned into a mosque at the time of the first invasion of Kashmir by the Muslims, about 1015 A.D.' She said nothing. She was looking in my eyes and smiling, in her passionate manner of approval. And was saying 'you clever boy'.

'You know why Shalamar is called Shalamar?' I said. 'Because the Mughals named it. It is a Muslim name'. I said naughtily, 'No wrong. It is a Hindu name 'Shala' means house or abode, and 'mar' is the name of the Hindu goddess of love'. I was laughing and so was she. 'I have failed in your exam'. She said, 'Tell me some that I don't know'. I don't know what you know or don't know. 'Thank your stars'. She was being naughty and that was when she was at her best. She always wanted me to speak to her in English. 'Please speak in English, but slowly, I get no practice because no one speaks to me as you do. They are always tied down by protocol and it is so boring. Tell me more'.

I am sure you know that Srinagar stands for 'Surjyanagar — the city of the Sun', a very ancient Hindu name. During the rule of the Muslims, the Hindu name was disused but when the Sikhs conquered Kashmir in 1819, they restored the old Hindu name, although some Muslims still talk of the capital as Kashmir, or Kashir, in the Kashmiri language. She was interested 'More'. A touch of command in the voice. 'You know the name of the isolated hill at the end of the town?'' 'Yes, Hari Parbat'. 'What does it mean?' I asked. She thought and replied 'Green mountain or hill'. Well done. Hari means Verdant 'Sursabz' and not what I had told an American lady with her grand-daughter, friend of His Highness, when I was showing her around the Dal Lake in the motorboat and the Gardens. 'What did you tell them?' 'I told them it was named really after his Highness, Harry's Hill. She laughed. 'Did you tell them this?' 'Yes I did.' He roared with laughter. And when they asked me about the Fort at the top of the hill, 'Who built that?' I told them, 'His Highness's great grand-father'. 'Is that true?' she asked innocently. 'Of course not. It was built by Emperor Akbar when he took this area in the sixteenth century A.D.'

One day picnic was arranged in the pavilion in Dal Lake. While His Highness played bridge I took Her Highness to Nishat and Shalamar gardens. 'Now, Mickey, don't tell her that I built these', he said while we took our seats in the motor boat.

I am now reminiscing about the days when Dal Lake was a lake of the cleanest of waters with a few floating gardens here and there, five miles from north to south and two miles from west to east. On three sides a mountainous amphitheater backs it where the summit is from 3,000 to 4,000 feet above the water. On the ground, at the foot of these mountains, at the edge of the lake, are numerous villages surrounded by orchards, and the renowned gardens constructed by the Mughal Emperors. 'Dal' (corruption of Dil or Heart) Lake is not 'Dull' Lake as the Britishers were apt to pronounce it, just to be different or couldn't be bothered to pronounce it correctly, a terrible complex of inferiority. This is what His Highness hated. The whole vista which I had the opportunity to study from the Palace wall, was something like a beautiful sapphire set in a cluster of emeralds and diamonds. Kashmir sapphires from the mines of Padar were set in the jewellery of Her Highness probably the finest of its kind made by Cartier of Paris under supervision of that Mr. Rosenthal, a jeweller and friend of His Highness who usually spent the winter in India, mostly with His Highness in Bombay. Now to continue with our trip to the Mughal gardens.

We first went to Shalamar. As we walked through the garden, Her Highness asked me some searching question. I had to be careful because she had done her homework it seemed. Shalamar was built by Emperor Jahangir, the contemporary of James - I, in 1619, When asked who built Achabal and Verinag, I hesitated, 'The Prime Minister and father-in-law of Jahangir, Asaf Khan'. Came another question

from Her Highness 'And the Nishat'. I was being put in my place. I had to say something. 'The design of the Shalamar differs from the Nishat, because the former is a royal garden and consisted of a garden for the Empress, nearest the lake, and another for the Emperor and the third for the ladies'. She said nothing. Just smiled. Then spoke, Who made Nasim Bagh?' Thank God I knew 'Akbar'. She smiled again. Now, having passed the test, we sat in the pavilion for a while, watching the fountains playing, and making different patterns in the sunlight. Her Highness was far away in her thoughts. I wanted to take her picture but the sun had gone down farther than expected. I knew her well enough to know that she did not like to be disturbed when she was in that mood. I sat leaning against a black marble pillar till she moved to go. 'Lets go, it will soon be dark'. As the motor boat moved she asked me 'which one do you like better, Shalamar or Nishat?' 'Nishat', was my answer, 'I agree. I like the terrace effect from the hill down to the main garden, it has been designed so artistically', Her Highness in spite of being absorbed in the sunset was kind enough to reply 'I agree'. She was a lady with manners. She asked me 'Why is the temple on top of the hill overlooking the pologrounds and palace called the 'Takhat-e-Sulaiman (the Throne of Solomon)?' 'Because the Muslims believe that it was raised by the celebrated king, when he visited Kashmir, but it is doubtful whether they can prove that this country was ever honoured with his presence'. She was listening, so I thought I would give her another interesting story. 'They also say that Jesus Christ is buried in Srinagar'. This brought her out of her thoughts. 'You don't believe that do you'. It is not what you and I believe, but what some others believe. When we believe in God, without seeing, it is easier to believe in something that someone has seen, be it a few hundred years ago; born without a father, and called the son of God, and now worshipped as God on Earth by millions'.

She spoke 'But he was crucified in Jerusalem, how did he get here?' I continued, 'Some believe that he did not die on the cross. That there was a storm and that he was taken down in the dark and rain, taken to a hiding place and revived there. When he had recovered completely he went East to preach to other tribes. Went as far as Tibet, some say, and on the way back died in this beautiful valley of Srinagar. There is a grave here, saying 'Issa Massih Nabi' (The Prophet Christ) on the tomb stone.'

She was quite alert now, 'Do you believe that?' I replied, 'Your Highness I would be prepared to believe anything that anyone believed provided it gave peace and faith to the person who believed in it. It is all so personal. The important thing is to derive good from the belief and then be good to others. I do believe, when some say that religions have caused more bloodshed and misery than a simple belief in God, high up in the Heaven, Whom we have not seen should cause. We are all animals of our environments'. She was quiet again and her thoughts were far away, that one could tell from her expression and eyes. She spoke, 'Very interesting. Tell me more, you are a religious person'. 'So are all accidents of birth, born in a particular society, and therefore in different environments'. I paused. She looked at me and smiled. 'You are religious and have a personal God'. God is personal. HE is within us. We are part of HIM. All of us. We are one and yet we fight with each other. 'The ADC said that Chashma Shahi Bank had come. This is where we anchored: And went to Chashma Shahi (the Royal Spring) Pavilion. A beautiful building, simple and peaceful, in the middle of two small hillocks, where a spring sprouts and on top of it is the pavilion. We were carrying our picnic eats with us. It was after the table cloth had been spread on the green land and tea poured for those who wanted it, that Her Highness spoke. 'Have you ever spoken to him (meaning His Highness) like this'. I replied, 'No. I

only said what I said, because you have a God and you believe in HIM. And that is the thing that is important between us. I agree, yes, I agree. And yet our God's worship is different. 'That doesn't make the Creator different'. She smiled, the smile of approval. She was a deeply religious person. She had all the time in the world to see her God. And pray to Him for her son, her world, her everything. His Highness had not had that time.

It was dark by the time we got back to the palace. On reaching there I took my leave. She folded her hands and bowed slightly, and was gracious enough to say 'Thank you so much... for this trip. I shall always remember it'. With this, she turned into the corridor, that took her back to her apartments.

This was the Maharani of Kashmir, a beautiful and charming person, bright as a star and unspoilt. The sapphires of Padar valley and diamond necklace, earrings and bangles to match from which Wavell (the then Viceroy) could not take his eyes off, as he says in his Journal, meant nothing to this gracious Maharani. She came from a village and she enjoyed the simple things in life including simple people. She was not very certain where the sapphires mines were in the remote mountains. She couldn't care. Meant nothing to her.

I was quite exhausted after the day's outing. I undressed and put on my pyjama suit and lay on my bed, staring at the ceiling, at the plaster work on the sides, and the centre. My mind was back in Shalamar and Nishat Gardens. I would like to have told her more about the beautiful valley her Dogras had won with sheer zeal, astuteness and bravery. She was Katoch and was very proud of it. She signed as 'Katochi' and not as 'Tara Devi'. I wondered if she knew that the historians of ancient Kings of Kashmir maintained that the whole of this country in former times was one vast lake, and that an outlet for the waters was opened by a certain Pir or Saint (named Kachels, or Kashuf which the princes form for Kashyupa, son of Marichi, son of Brahama, the Mishi or sage by whom, according to his Hindu treatise, the passage in question was formed).

Emperor Jahangir had an abridged translation done of this old record into Persian. This may have been so, but the opening in question could only have been the work of nature. I often wondered how much she understood of her religion. She was religious, but that is something different. To understand your faith (that produces doubts on occasions) to remove those one has to go deeper and study other religions. I have been through the exercises from early age and after some six decades found that all Gods are the same — ONE Creator for ALL. I wrote this a few years back:

> **Fikr mein ikhtilaf lazim hai**
> **Yun Khuda sarey ek hotey hein.**
> *"In intellect differences were bound to be,*
> *God, otherwise was one-bound to be".* (S. A.)

She must have understood her religion, she was so tolerant to mine. I was a Muslim and known to be 'religious' and yet she was so kind to me. Her religion to her was a personal affair, and a simple one. She did her Pooja in solitude. She had reverence for her ancestors. Maharaja Gulab Singh's name was too holy and revered to be mentioned in conversation. He was, a semi-God, and worshipped as such.

She had little in common with her husband, he was too westernized for her. She had been selected for her beauty, and breeding from a village in the Dogra country. After selection she had been schooled to be a Maharani. She had found this irksome, coming from a conservative and traditional background, from the family of Katochis. She found some of the values of modern, 'western' way of life,

opposite to her own values. She liked life, sometimes she loved it too, but within the limits of her traditional boundaries. So there was a clash; was bound to be. When I first met her, she was just getting over her initial shyness in her new role. The Tara (Star) of the village, rural spaces, to that of confined spaces, and walls and corridors and bright halls and walled grounds of Palace, social life and confined life. It was irksome for her. She wanted spaces, she wanted her sky where at most nights she could watch the sparkle and the movement of the stars — the name she was given

When she got to know me she liked to ask me searching questions about my religion and was surprised when I said that in Islam, there was no 'Church' or 'Priesthood' and it was not a 'Religion' but a code of conduct. She said the first time, I remember so well, "Then you believe in our God? Your one Brahama, but not the so many that have been made by men, to make it easy for a person of average, or low intellect, to reach the One. That is why Islam is so much against images and portraits, ordinary average persons, being what they are, start believing in their own made statues as gods; this is forbidden. A stone can give nothing, it can't even break itself.

She was a devout believer of the teachings of Sri Aurubindo — who after his enlightment from his Master, had taught universal faith. He had travelled extensively in Europe and been in USA before the beginning of the 20th Century and had come back and opened many Ashrams throughout India. Whenever we had come on the subject of religion, she had said, 'But we drink the same water from the same tank — only the Chats are different. It is the Sun that gives light to us all. 'I wish she had been alive today to listen to the poetry I have been writing since many decades now. I know she would have liked it. She always asked me to recite Ghazals of Ghalib and Dagh.

Ek TARA jo bun key aie thi — TARA ja bani hey phir koi
One who came here as a Star,
Has gone back again, to become a Star.
Ya Diy Mir per hey hem bani — Pani deti hey sab ko ab koi
*Or has she become snow on Diyameer,**
And gives water to all — near and far.
Ham to rotay hen yad men teri — Aansoo darya bane kahan koi
We cry on your remembrance and dream,
But a tear cannot become a stream.
Darya bahta hey ibtida ki taraf — Ab samandar kahan bane koi
The river flows always towards its origin,
How does one become an ocean or a stream.
Ek din hum to millen gey akhir mein — Ek qiyamat to ayegi koi
One day we will meet again,
One day the end will come again.
Ham ko jana hay us hi roh mein — Jaisey aaye thei yad hay koi
We will go back to the same One Spirit,
Remember the origin of us all from that same One Spirit.
Tum ko tha shauq shehr sunaney ka —
Ab sunata hun likh key khud ko hee koi
You were fond of hearing poetry,
Now I write and listen to my own poetry.
Yad aati hay dil to rota hay — Aankh num ho key rahâti hay koi
Remembrance makes the heart cry,
The eye when wet cannot help, but cry.
Chand aansoo to chhup bhi jatey hein —
Koi darya bane to kiya karey koi

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* NANGA PARBAT

A few tears can be hidden — nothing happens,
But if one becomes a river — What will happen.
Daastan apni khud hi likh raha hun mein —
Kon samjhey ga is ko ab koi
I am writing my Saga — myself,
Who will now understand this except myself.
Sher ab janglon mein rehta hay — Tara Devi wahan milley koi
Sher now resides in the jungles — these days
In the hope of meeting Tara Devi — One day.

In 1947 on 15th August India was celebrating according to its modern Hindu hisorians the end of its colonial occupation of 400 years. Actually that is not true. The Muslims came to stay in north-western/ eastern India much earlier, 800 years would be more correct. It was Shahabuddin Ghori who laid the foundation of permanent Muslim rule in 1192 by defeating the Rajput United Army at Tarin, 40 miles from Delhi. The Marhattas came much later to challenge the Muslims. In history it is difficult to define an invader. The Aryans were outsiders and pushed the original inhabitants further south. It is they who brought the caste system. But the identity of nationalism to Hindus was given by the Muslims. All inhabitants of India or Bharat were Hindus, even if they did not belong to that faith. If the caste system had not been so rigid and preserved with such vigour by the Brahmins to preserve their own superiority, there may have been a change of interaction, in the subcontinent. Has India succeeded in its claim of being truly secular? Have we succeeded in our experiment with real democracy, or does Winston Churchill still stand correct when he says that democracy may be a terrible form of government but no one has yet produced a better one. We claim in Pakistan to be Islamic. Are we? Islam's Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.s. forbids two institutions in Islam, Church and Priesthood. Nothing thrives more than these two today. Where do we go?

This is the kind of talk I used to have with Her Highness of 'K'. She was a religious person but not a bigoted one, because she understood the spirit of her faith — all gods were one. The Creator was one. The Producer was one. The Destroyer was one. You can call this Trinity. But it was all the same one — the Being. That is what attracted me to her. And that is what attracts me to her son, her only child, known today as Dr. Karan Singh.

I first met him when he was I think 5 or 6 years of age. A handsome child who had inherited his looks from his mother, and specially the eyes. He also spoke through his eyes more than through his lips. He was also an introvert and shy like his mother. He was also a dreamer. One develops because of one's environments. He had a tutored life. His playmates were two boys of his own age and state. They could never be equal to him, even though they lived and played with him and had the same tutor. So, therefore, he learnt to be alone at a very early age. His meetings with his father were audiences and tutorial tests in a diplomatic fashion. I was present at one, or two. His meetings with his mother were more relaxed. He was her world. It was the only time and place I saw him being naughty and playful, as a child should be. When he jumped and ran in and out of sofas in the drawing room, the joy on her face was worth watching. She used to remark 'He is enjoying himself. He is happy'. I remember remarking, 'He loves you very much. It's all over his face'. And her remark 'He is all I have to live for'. The remark could not have gone unheard. It must have stuck at the back of his mind. Like my mother's remarks which are as fresh today as they were when I was small. His mother lived in palaces but in conditions that only those who have lived in there know, a lonely life in luxury and comfort that in the end became a bore and burden. Living in the midst of endless retainers, endless activity in corridors and dozens of rooms big

and small, hundreds of eyes watching one's movements, to record, to report. Practically no privacy and yet one was so alone. No one to be sure of. No one whom one could open one's heart to and let the tears run out into rivers on carpets. And... when one saw one exclaimed, 'How beautiful, how lucky'. Was it lucky, when those who appreciated didn't matter?

Tiger Karan Singh was a highly intelligent child, very respectful. Seeing the futility and the tragedy of the life that was lived by his mother and his father, day in and day out, unknown to the world, prohibited by palace walls' strict court protocol, from mingling with the outside world.

I would like to think, that I had something to do with the selection of his last tutor, before he went to school, I suggested the name of Mr. Ritchie, my own tutor at Aitchison College, Lahore, when I was 10-12, this was before I went to R.I.M.C., Dehra Dun. I really never saw him grow up. The last time I saw him before the war was in Jammu in 1940, when he was 11. I remember so well taking pictures of him in the polo ground. He alone on his pony and there with him his companions Bilty and Digby. The picture is in my study. The three of them on ponies with their small polo sticks and polo balls on the ground. Mr. Ritchie was standing on my right the shy Scotsman would not come in the picture. I used to ride his grey horse 'Piyara' in Lahore when I was aged 11-12.

It was not easy to talk to Dr. Karan Singh then. When told by Mr. Ritchie or his mother, 'Why don't you talk — say something'. The reply used to be 'What shall I say...' I appreciated that because I had been through the same experience when I was that age. One hardly knew oneself. How was one to know the others, specially when they were grown up.

It did not take long to realize that Tiger did not enjoy the thought of being a polo player. He was too intelligent and true to himself, to have his joy dependent on a horse, an animal. A person yes. Not an animal perhaps that could not reciprocate his feelings.

When I heard he had married a Nepalese princess I was keen to meet her. He had been engaged to another person. But had to break off the engagement when his father changed his mind because of his mood. These kind of changes, are perhaps the most important act in one's life, over which one has no control, because of an accident of birth, and were bound to leave deep impressions on a mind like Tiger Karan's. But he bore it well. He bore such conditions from the day he started understanding the happenings around him, and he did that from a very early age; that is the kind of child he was. He took all these things in his stride. Because of an accident to his right leg and later complications which took him on long travels to different lands, it left him with a limp in his right leg. So nature restricted him even in his taking strides like a normal person. But he was not normal. Very special people, are not just 'normals'. This restriction in his physical life gave him that impulse, which a person like him was to develop to make up for that 'handicap' and therefore today we find his mental faculties far beyond the understanding of a 'normal' person. He had studied with Rishis and Swamis. If he hadn't been born by an accident, where he was, I often wonder if I would have ever met him. Or let me put it this way. Would I have ever became associated with him if by an accident of birth, I had not been where I was?

I have never discussed all this with Tiger, but I will one day soon, Inshallah, especially having gone through his book 'One Man's World' which he kindly sent me on his birthday the 9th of March. He does not even know I have been writing poetry from the age of 15-16. And wrote my first play in English in my spare time at Sandhurst. While others smoked and had a drink and danced, I had a pen and paper and drew my world on paper, which took the form of a dialogue. I gave it to

my Ustad or Guru, as Tiger would put it, to read, he liked it very much and translated it in Urdu. He was the famous Urdu Writer and Poet Andalib Shadani (of Dacca University) when I went to War and into 70% of boredom. I didn't sleep in my quarters or Basha, or Bunk or a dugout or got bored and drank and read 'light' books. I just wrote, a story of a Person in different places and different identities, and different moods. I again gave it to my same Guru. He liked it, translated it in Urdu and published in his Urdu weekly, Khawar, from Calcutta and Dacca. People liked it so much that they inquired who the writer was of 'Apani Kahani Apani Zubani' that he had done with the assistance of one of his bright student (now Senior Professor of Urdu in Islamabad University) translated it. It got published as 'Umeed' (Hope) and was sold out in a matter of weeks. It did not allow my name to be exposed.

So you see I must have had something in common with Tiger from an early age. He was called Tiger — Sher, so we had this link — as his mother used to remind me. The Partition separated us and yet really brought us together. I had so much affection for his parents that when I met him for the first time after Partition, after years I asked him to write a Foreword to my book 'Quest of Identity'.

The fact that he was astute in politics is proved by his assessment of what was going on in his state. When his father was living in a world of his own surrounded by his Swamiji Sant Dev and other sycophants. The only good that he, 'Swamiji' did, was as explained by Dr. Karan Singh himself — 'I feel that his influence on my father's personal life was all to the good. He had urged him to cut down on his smoking and drinking, and generally tempered his rather aggressive nature with some sort of religious commitments, howsoever superficial. Also, he was an influence in bringing my parents close to each other. My mother being deeply religious was, of course, delighted at this turn of events, and her elder brother, Thakur Nachint Chand — who was many years the Deorhi Officer or Chamberlain — grew in importance at the court as an intermediary between Swamiji and my father. I also had to see Swamiji regularly, but my hip pain was beginning to find it increasingly difficult to sit crosslegged on the floor, and so rather avoided going there. Swamiji always treated me with great affection. He was a connoisseur of classical music, and enjoyed hearing me sing his favourite raag, Jaijaiwanti.

'But in the political sphere the Swamiji's influence was to be disastrous as explained by Dr. Karan Singh — 'As with many of the larger Indian States, the prospect of becoming an independent ruler after the British withdrawal was an alluring one for my father. He had never taken happily to British suzerainty, and at the same time was far too deeply enmeshed in the feudal tradition to really come to terms with democratic forces that were gaining momentum in the Sub-Continent and within the state itself. A major weakness of the feudal system is that the rulers are told only what their courtiers think they want to hear, which is seldom in consonance with what is in fact happening. It was on this feudal ambition that Sawamiji astutely played, planting in my father's mind visions of an extended kingdom sweeping down to Lahore itself, where our ancestor Maharaja Gulab Singh and his brothers Raja Dyan Singh and Raja Suchet Singh had played such a crucial role a century earlier. There is also some reason to believe that Swamiji was in touch with some of the Congress leaders, and that Acharya Kirpalani's visit to the State early in 1947 was a direct result of his intervention.

'Be that as it may, the end of Dogra rule was fast approaching, although my father seemed to be blissfully unaware of the tremendous forces that were on the move in the subcontinent. Within the State Sheikh Abdullah had converted his Muslim Conference, founded in 1931, to the National Conference and had developed personal and ideological links with Jawaharlal Nehru. He was active in the

State's people's movement which was sort of counterpart in the Indian States of the wider anti-British movement of the Indian National Congress. Although Abdullah was never really trusted by the more conservative Congress leaders like Sardar Patel, he succeeded in gaining the close confidence of Jawaharlal who, perhaps because of his Kashmiri origin, looked upon Kashmir as his special sphere of interest.'

He says this about Mr. Jinnah — 'Jinnah had little use for Abdullah and his associates, partly because the Sheikh was not prepared to toe his line and partly because of Jinnah's messianic belief that he and his Muslim League were the sole guardian of Muslim interests in the subcontinent. Abdullah's tactics were simple but effective. Surcharged as he always was with anti-Dogra feelings, he played skilfully on Nehru's anti-feudalism by making my father the main target of his political assault. In May, 1946 Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference launched a 'Quit Kashmir' agitation on the lines of Gandhiji's celebrated 'Quit India' movement four years earlier. Prior to that my father had taken some steps towards popular government in the State, including a dyarchy experiment in 1944 with the setting up of a partially elected Praja Sabha. But this did not satisfy the National Conference's demand for a full share in State Power. In 1945 the Sopore session of that party had been attended by Jawaharlal Nehru and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and the India and National Congress, which was generally backing the State People's Conference, had shown special interest in Kashmir in view of the impending partition and the close personal friendship between Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah. Unfortunately, my father was not able to grasp the historic dimensions of the changes that were around the corner. This is amply borne out by the fact that when on 20 May, Sheikh Abdullah and a number of other National Conference workers were arrested, and Jawaharlal Nehru announced his intention to visit the State, his entry was banned. Characteristically, Jawaharlal decided to defy the ban and enter Kashmir from the Punjab via the Kohala bridge. A company of State Forces troops commanded by a Gurkha Officer, Major Bhagwana Singh, stood with bayonets fixed half-way across the bridge. Jawaharlal, fearless as ever, walked across and pushed the bayonets aside. By a stroke of good fortune Bhagwan Singh was a tactful and intelligent man. He ordered his troops, aside, and politely asked Jawaharlal to come across the Bridge and informed him that he was under arrest.

'The news reached us in Gulab Bhavan, and Pandit Kak, the then Prime Minister, reported to my father with subdued pride and excitement that Jawaharlal had been arrested. I was stunned. Here was the most charismatic leader of the national movement for freedom, the author of the autobiography — Discovery of India, the declared future Prime Minister of the Indian Republic, and, instead of welcoming him and seeking his co-operation, we had arrested him. I have no doubt that his arrest was the ruining point in the history of the State. Jawaharlal was brought to Srinagar, and after three days, the Congress Working Committe persuaded him to come back to India. Later in July the State's Government lifted the ban on his entry and he did come and interview Sheikh Abdullah in jail. But it was too late; the die had been cast' and it was only a matter of time before disaster struck.'

It is interesting to note that Tiger Karan Singh says about his father before his departure from the scene — 'It has always seemed to me tragic that a man as intelligent as my father, and in many ways as constitutional and progressive, should have in those last years so grievously misjudged the political situation in the country. He was generally an enlightened ruler, having, for example, thrown all temples in the State open to Harijans as far back as 1932. On that occasion the Raj Pandit in

Jammu, who was head priest of our family temple the Sri Raghunath Mandir, had opposed the move. My father dismissed him peremptorily, and appointed his brother in his place only after he had unequivocally agreed to accept the Harijans. Similarly, in many matters relating to land tenure and administration my father had introduced reforms far in advance of most other Indian States. Having appointed his Ministers, the Muslim contingent usually from U.P., he would not interfere with their working. Indeed there was a case when a citizen of Jammu living just outside our palace challenged in court my father's decision to acquire his property, and successfully prevented the move. In fact when at the age of thirty he ascended the throne on 23 September 1925 he had proclaimed 'Justice is my religion and merit alone will be considered the deciding factor for all types of employment. Caste, creed, religion or sex will receive no consideration'. During his reign he introduced a number of administrative and political reforms, culminating in 1944 in an experiment in dyarch. Under this the Praja Sabha, set up a decade earlier, was given the right to nominate a panel of six, out of which he would choose two persons to join the Council of Ministers. This, for the first time introduced a (Popular) element in the government, and towards the end of 1944 two such Ministers were appointed, Mirza Afzal Beg and Wazir Ganga Ram, who had secured the highest votes among the Muslim and Hindu candidates respectively.

The other day Dr. Karan Singh asked me to read his book 'mundaka upanishar' — The Bridge to Immortality, and give him my views on it, I am no scholar though I am a Ph.D. now. I know no Sanskrit, nor Hindi, but I do know a bit about my mother tongue Urdu — a language that developed in India after the Muslim invasions. The word Urdu is a Mongol word meaning Camp. It was brought to India by the Turks. I gave my views :

I write on the concept of a World religion, which has its source and its outlet in belief in Oneness (Wahdaniat) and its propagation on the preaching and propaganda of humanity. But the tragedy is the human being has been the victim of humanity.

The Hindu faith has been based on the belief which the Aryan race brought to Hindustan (Bharat) over 4 thousand years back. The origin of the Hindu religion is not based on the teachings of a prophet or some sacred book. It respects faiths and does not try in converting others to its fold. It teaches that the Spirit (Atma — Soul) is immortal. And for the ultimate achievement of the Soul mixing with the Creator. It educates humanity in wisdom, knowlegde and good deeds. I quote a piece from Bhagwat Gita, 'Anyone who believes that the soul can be slaughtered or dies and perishes, is not correctly informed because the soul is neither a killer nor one that can be killed. The body gets destroyed and the soul is immortal (Bhagwat Gita Chapter-2)

Dr. Karan Singh's book is thought-provoking and by careful study one is impressed by the stress on Oneness, the One Being and the One All Powerful. But because of belief in Transmigration (of soul) the paths become different. Every person approaches according to his knowledge.

George Bernard Shaw has said, 'Islam is the best Faith, but the Muslims are the worst people'.

I was born a Muslim by an accident of birth. I am only a Muslim today because of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) The Messenger of God. To him came the revelation, the mission and the inspiration. But what was it leading to ? It was a miracle, but not in the sense of reversing of nature. This is the Book (Quran), I have read from the age of seven — a simple code of conduct, applicable to all societies, practicable by all mankind, in any part of the world. There is no 'church' in it. There is no 'priest-hood' in it. There is just ONE BEING ('I am what I am') to be true to. All

actions and acts of a person are judged by his motives. The noble among the people is the one who is the most devout and the one who is the most good and kind man. This is what I have learnt after the study and prayers of over seven decades. I am today aware of the 'Ahsas-i-Gunah' (the perception of sin). Have I achieved anything ? I don't know. All I know is that I believe in the BEING without seeing.

Mein nay mana hai tujhko bin deikhey — Deikh lay kaisey kaisey hotey hain
I have believed in you without seeing you,
See what kind of a devotee — is me.
Fikr mein ikhtilaf lazim hai — Yun Khuda sarey ek hotey hein
In intellect some differences are — bound to be,
Otherwise all Gods are ONE — bound to be.
Kuch to huga tera bhi merey mein — Varna aisey kahan sey hotey hein
There must be something of you — in me,
Otherwise how can there be individuals — like me.
Hai yaqeen bukhsh day ga sub-ko to — Sub Khuda rehmatun key hotey hein
I am sure you will pardon all — that be,
All Gods are Gracious and Benevolent — bound to be.
Sher kin ko suna rahey ho tum — Sunenay walley to aur hotey hein
Sher whom are you addressing this poetry to,
Listeners of such poetry are different too.

I am sure Tiger Karan will understand it. It is this common factor that makes him my nephew and me his uncle.

BHOPAL — PATAUDI

Life is nothing more than an association of human beings. But this association itself has to have a sparking point and then a link. Relationships because of accidents of birth can be a natural sparking point. But friendship follows no rules or logic. Because of something that cannot be defined and because of this unknown link, there is an urge and caring which makes it the most cherished relationship.

It is interesting to note that the start of most of my associations practically with all these princes has been caused by the love of an animal — the noble horse. And it is from that association from horseback and in stables and the race courses, polo grounds and pigsticking camps and even meets before the hunts, that life long friendships were started and lived and enjoyed.

My very first contact was sparked off in the beautiful vale of Kashmir, in Srinagar when I was taken to pay my respects to His Highness Partap Singh, the Maharaja of

Jammu and Kashmir, at the age of 7. It is at that time when I went and stayed with my aunt the Begum of Mamdot in Gulmerg that I first saw two people with whom I got closely associated later in life — Maharaja Hari Singh and Nawab Khusrojang — when I saw them playing polo on the Gulmerg ground.

Later through the same contact, Maharaja Hari Singh, I met the 'Monarch' — Maharaja Umed Singh of Jodhpur. Then as I grew and my polo grew with me, the circle of associations increased.

I first met, Maharaja Man Singh of Jaipur, at a polo ground, in Calcutta. And there I met his team mate Maharaj Prithi Singh of Baria who became one of my closest friends.

Bhaiya the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, I had met earlier when I was at Sandhurst but the friendship developed because of polo. He was very fond of cricket too, like my brother, the Nawab of Pataudi.

One of my earlier contacts was my Cachaji, His Highness Rakaraja Bhupinder Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala, who was my 'uncle' (Chachaji) because he and my father had exchanged turbans (pagribadal bhai) at school (Aitchison College — Lahore) and this custom made them brothers. His Highness was slightly older than my father who died very young, before attaining the age of 30 but His Highness was a cricket enthusiast which was an attraction for my brother but I was attracted to him, first because he knew my father (which I didn't and the manner in which he treated me, showed how much he must have loved him, twice he had lifted me and kissed me saying 'He is like my Ibi' —a short for my father's name which was Ibrahim). The other pull towards him was the name of his famous polo team — 'Patiala Tigers'. I think the first 40 goal team of India or was it Hyderabad — the Goolkonda Lancers? I met a couple of these old boys in Patiala and in Delhi, but unfortunately when they were well away riding the 'White Horse' or the 'Black Dog', and never saw them play on the polo ground.

And then of course, there was the great polo player — His Highness Nawab Hamidullah Khan, the Nawab of Bhopal, who became my 'uncle' and a 'friend' all wrapped up later in one package of a benevolent 'father'. The attraction was polo and his pet game — cycle polo — which he played with such dash and courage that it left him with many scars on his face. I remember standing next to him many a time in his Bhopal jungles taking on a tiger on the ground, without a flinch. Last time this happened was when he had taken his felt hat off his head and said 'Hush' to the tiger to make him turn to the line where the chief guest was to take the first shot at him. It happened so quickly that I only reflected upon it later 'what would have happened if this animal had taken a leap on us from no more than 20 feet, because the rifle hand (right hand) had a felt hat in it and I was busy with the camera. When I told him of this on our return to the camp in the jeep, his remarks was typical. 'Yes, it was rather childish, now that you have pointed it out and of course I had forgotten that you had a camera and not a rifle', and drove on merrily telling me how he had killed a tiger no more than 10 feet away going across his jeep but then he was sitting next to the driver and had his rifle with him. He was a wonderful shot. I saw him bring down a black buck in a leap from 200 yards. Unbelievable; but the pleasure was to see him take a near side back hander that turned the defence into an attack and that same back hander picked up by the No. 1 who took a semi-under the neck shot from 120 yards and put it through the middle of the goal. That was polo. Played on grounds like billiard tables, with long strokes of delicate and strong touches, like in the game of billiards. I mourn this 'father prince' most today.

It is interesting that the three "big" ones I got to know well were not born heirs, they weren't even heir apparents. H.H. Hari Singh (Jammu and Kashmir) was

a nephew of the ruler. H.H. Hamidullah Khan (Bhopal) was the youngest son with two elder brothers, both with two and three sons respectively. The age difference between the number two and number three (Hamidullah) was 17 years. This gave them a touch of normality over the others. The Monarch, H.H. Umaed Singh (Jodhpur) was the most normal of anyone I knew — big or small. He was quite exceptional in that way. On the demise of his father (the ruler) the elder brother became the ruler but died early leaving behind a daughter (who later became the No. 2 Maharani of Jaipur), so he became the ruler. Their sister incidentally was the No. 1 Maharani of Jaipur. So the aunt and the niece were married to the same person — such were the ways of the princes. Marriages were alliances and wives were not exactly what we the poor soldiers had to be content with. In that respect, ours were much luckier. They did not share their man under the same roof or in the same palace.

Hamidullah Khan like the others had his weaknesses in which he indulged to relax when he had free moments from his State papers and the Chamber of Princes problems, of which there were many. The principal Secretary of this Chamber was seen often with his briefcase in Bhopal and the reason that took him to His Highness so often was this Chamber's mission, princely petty intrigues and the apathy on the part of the 'big five' — Wavell, the Viceroy, found it easier to remember the order of precedence by cooking up this Sentence — 'Hot Kippers Make Good Breakfast' — H-for Hyderabad, K-for Kashmir, M-for Mysore, G-for Gwalior and B-for Baroda. Except for Hyderabad, with the others I found that the seniority was a fluctuating factor, dependent on the age (date of installation of the Gaddi or the throne). The 21 gun banging could also be reduced at the discretion of the Viceroy — the Crown representative and the Governor-General, the fountain-head of the Paramount Power, the British Indian Government. The position of Hyderabad remained constant as the Faithful Ally of the British Government — for the alliance with the British against the Muslim Ruler of Mysore, Tippu Sultan and his father Haider Ali.

The Princes were very particular and touchy about protocol. In the 30's, the period which I am writing about mostly, Kashmir was always the senior one in Delhi during the Durbar Polo Tournaments, thank God, or I woud have found myself in the midst of 42 or even more gun barrages, because invariably when he went on any protocol function I had to accompany him in my dandy uniform of 7th Light Cavalry. They all liked colour and good and pretty faces around them. The only two of what I call the 'bigger ones' who couldn't care much about such 'rubbish' were Bhopal and Jodhpur.

As for Jodhpur, as I have said somewhere, he went and sat with syces (grooms), to hear the polo gossip and mainly to avoid meeting his own kind who would be swarming the Box or the Boxes near the Raj. He drove his car himself, like Bhopal, and had just a chauffeur or an A.D.C. who remained well in the background.

Once again I think the reason for this behaviour was that they had had a normal upbringing and were not surrounded by hangers-on who always worshipped the rising sun. And I think Bhopal's mother had a lot to do with what he was. She was an exceptional person, in every way. In a similar way so was my mother and she got furious when she saw my brother being favoured by the hangers-on. She pushed me to be with him in all ceremonial functions and I remember so well the Annual Salutation (a *Dua* — Prayer)... *Khuda yeh jori banae rakh* (may God keep this pair). It was always the pair and not single. Again this kind of approach must have been the reason why my brother was so normal and I had no complexes about the Aka Bhai (the elder brother). Here it is worth relating an incident.

A teacher (Maulvi) Karamatullah (Aitchison College) became our 'teacher' during our long summer holidays when we were at school in Lahore. Three months of association in a year is a long time for any teacher and particularly one of our Maulvi Sahib's talents. I remember so well, it was in Srinagar 1922 that this episode took place. One day Maulvi Sahib said that I was calling my brother incorrectly — it is not Aka (elder) Bhai (brother) but Aqa (master), that is what I should call him. Our Houseboats on the Jhelum River were tied cheek by jowl in the stillness and quietness (that sometimes occurs, even during the animated conversation — clatter of forks, knives and plates at a dinner table), which must have occurred in the morning lesson period on the balcony of our Houseboat, my mother must have heard this piece of advice delivered to me. Soon there was summons for Maulvi Sahib. And one could hear her strong and clear voice saying 'I am surprised to hear the advice that you gave to my younger son. I thought you people from Punjab could not pronounce Qaf (letter of Urdu alphabet) and always wrongly got it as Kaf. This is the first time you have done the other way round, the word is Aka (elder) with a Kaf and not Aqa (master) with a Qaf. I hope I have made myself clear'. 'Yes Hazoor. I am sorry to have made the mistake...' when he got back to give me the lesson I found him very crestfallen. All he said to me was to forget what I have told you about Aka and Aqa. I went a step further it seems because I hardly remember even calling him Aka (elder) — I always called him Bhai (brother). As he was my only brother there was no need I thought for a prefix. As he was older than me it would have been wrong for me to have called him by his personal name Iftikhar — something that I find so common in the 'progressive' society of today. I don't remember a single letter or a photograph where I have used the prefix before Bhai. This incident must have left a mark on me. And we became friends and equals at a very early age. He was of course another very exceptional man. A great gentleman. Humble and kind. Shy and very sensitive. He never took his anger out on anyone except himself. He didn't drink but smoked like a chimney — even a chimney has a let-up. His only let-up was sleep. I think this is what killed him so early — smoking and I think the resultant — cancer. He had lost a lot of weight suddenly and within weeks he was dead. I remember writing to my sister-in-law after seeing him for a few hours in Karachi, when he passed through, on his way back from England. I remember telling him about it but he said that he had had all the tests done and it was the crowded bumpy air trip that he had just had. This is the first time that I had seen him after partition and it was the last time that I saw him alive. The next time I saw him was when I lowered him in his grave in Pataudi, on the 6 of January 1952 and gave him my last kiss on his forehead. H.H. Bhopal arrived just in time for the burial, I remember him holding me in his arms after I had kissed my Bhai.

With his death we lost a great gentleman and a great sportsman. He had a brilliant brain, and was good with his tongue, particularly in after dinner speeches and was easy and clear with his pen, as Menon the then Foreign Secretary pointed out in his long obituary note. On the 5 of January 1952 on the polo ground in the middle of the race course in New Dehli, I lost my only brother, my 'father' and my best friend. No one could have had a more loyal and caring friend than him.

He was married in the Bhopal family — to the daughter of His Highness, Princess Sajida Sultan. It was a romance. They were first introduced by a mutual friend. F. M. Khan (Fateh Muhammad Khan — known to friends as F. M. or Fateh), a Pathan nobleman, from the Khans of Sheva in the North West Frontier Province. He was married to the sister of the Nawab of Malerkotla, and Princess Abida Sultan the heir apparent of Bhopal, was married to her nephew, i.e., F. M.'s wife, was the aunt of Sarwar Khan, the Nawab of Kurwai. I mentioned this here because I was

interested in the last named gentleman because he had won the 'Saddle' at Sandhurst, the only Indian to have held that distinction.

The marriage did not take place till the 9 of April 1939, and then only when she gave an ultimatum to her father that if he did not agree to give her away she would walk out on him. He finally agreed and gave her away in marriage to my brother, but I am afraid not with grace. What he had against my brother I don't know. Even when I got to know him well I never touched on this subject. I think it was something personal, a sort of jealousy, for my brother having done so well in cricket and other games (a Blue in hockey as well as cricket), played for India in hockey in 1932, inside right to Dhian Chand as centre forward, seven at golf which meant a half blue, then captained Oxford against Cambridge at Billiards and half blue in tennis), indeed a formidable record which I don't think has been surpassed yet. His Highness Bhopal prided himself as a great sportsman — a nine goal polo player, a good cricketer at Aligarh (in his school days). Before starting even a brief history of Bhopal it is essential to write about the condition which prevailed in the area of Central India and Malwa which eventually created the pattern that emerged afterwards. Those were the days of the Marhatta Confederacy itself in chaos, the rise of the Pindharis and their defeat by Wellesley.

It was the day of Behoit do Boigne — in the late eighteenth century, a name that resounded in Hindustan and affected the price of India stock in London and caused speculation in Paris. It was the name of the best known — the richest and the most powerful professional soldier in the land. This man had served in the Irish Brigade in Flanders, fought for the Russians against the Turks, had been sold as a slave in Constantinople (now Istambul), been favoured by the Empress Catherine in St. Petersburg, and had been court-marshalled in Madras, as an officer in the East India Company's army, for flirting with another officer's wife.

Misfortune, that proved a blessing in disguise befell him when later on in an attempt to discover an overland route to Russia, his papers plus the money he had were stolen. He abandoned his journey and sold his sword instead to Madhaji Scindia who was then busy trying to establish his authority at Delhi.

The Marhattas in a century of conquest, after the demise of Emperor Aurangzeb, had become the dominant power in India and levied tribute over an area of a million square miles. Their success lay in their mobility, over the country they raided, until the unfortunate inhabitants sued for peace at any price. All the Rajputana Rajas paid them tribute. In 1784 Scindia had twice seen a British Force of 4,000 European and native infantry, defeat his army of 20,000 horsemen. The capture of the great fortress of Gwalior by a small force of native infantry lead by European officers, caused him to accept de Boigne's offer and he was commissioned to raise two battalions of Infantry.

The Mughal Emperor was no more than a symbol of sovereignty, a puppet in the hands of his nobles who were busy fighting and intriguing among themselves for power. Scindia took advantage of this and made himself paramount at Delhi. It was de Boigne who had consolidated and attained his master's position by crushing all opposition from the nobles, battering the insurgent Rajput states of Jaipur and Jodhpur into cohesion and decisively defeating the rival Marhatta house of Holkar. These were the days when my ancestors were slinging their sword around Delhi and beyond, defendig their territories and expanding if they could, taking full advantage of the chaos that prevailed at the time. Later on in 1804 they were to join the British in crushing the Marhattas and becoming Pataudis and Jhajjars.

These were the days when anyone who had an executioner's sword or could fire a musket from a moving horse or camel was employed without any questions being asked.

Madhaji Scindia, de Boigne's master died in 1883 and was succeeded by his grand-nephew and adopted son, Daulat Rao who was just fifteen. In 1774 de Boigne was the wealthiest soldier in India (having made over half a million pounds in less than ten years) and had made his name great. He was a shrewd Frenchman from Chambray and realized that it would not be long before swords crossed between the two leading powers in the plains of India — the British and the Marhattas. He had no desire to take on the British, but he did give his new master a parting advice — never to excite the jealousy of the British by increasing his two brigades of Infantry, but if it ever came to that or war, to disband the Infantry. But his advice was ignored and another Frenchman Pierrer Cuillier with the nom de guerre of Perron was promoted to general and elevated to the supreme command.

The rashness of the young Marhatta ruler and the desire of the British to control the 'eye' of the Mughal myth — the Delhi Red Fort (actually a palace) brought events to pass which saw Lake (General Lord Lake of Ireland) at the Court of the last great Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II — who had been blinded by a Pathan Sufi Abdul Qadir Rohila.

Lake had crushed the Marhattas in 1805, but for some reason the Directors in London were hesitant to expand too much without consolidation; he had shown too much indulgence to Marhattas. No sooner was the ink dry on their treaties than they were back at their old game. They were collecting by force, all over Rajputana, Malwa (Bhopal) and the Deccan, their old duel through horses and infantry constantly on the move, levying contributions indiscriminately and punishing zamindars who failed to pay blackmail or tribute.

Added to this were the Pindharis hordes, not a tribe, but a huge, loose organization of bandits, who created the kind of warfare the Marhattas had introduced in India. They soon rose into a predatory power. Bands were joined in federal unions, out of havoc the Chiefs arose who operated independently. One such Chief, Karim Khan, whose hordes were augmented by Pathan and Marhatta soldiers even entered the British territory of Madras Residency. In December 1816 when news came that the Pindharis had reached the cantonment the entire European population dropped everything and fled in panic to Fort St. George. It turned out to be a false alarm but the effect of the word 'Pindhari' produced fear and panic.

The Marhatta rulers, although they had all been plunered by them, had never managed to cope with the Pindhari menace. In fact, they used them against 'others'. In September 1817 there were no less than a hundred thousand of these free looters ravaging Central India and four-months later they were all dead or dispersed, never to plunder again.

The entire Holkar Army was at Mahidpur, but Malcolm had the Pindharis to lose heart and they ran for their lives. My ancestors made a name for themselves at Mahidpur and it was one of the reasons for the prize of Pataudi. Those who had been on the side of the British were rewarded. Bhopal received some territory from Dhar besides high honour for valour and loyalty.

It is under these conditions that Bhopal survived under its rulers, that made them so resourceful and tenacious, and their wives as good as husbands, if not better, in fighting their battles shoulder to shoulder with their men.

When the Sepoy Mutiny came in May 1857 — which is now heralded as the 'War of Independence' by some, it was because of experience gained in such holocausts that Muslim states like Bhopal and Hyderabad, etc. did not join the cause of the Mutineers. They had gone through untold misery at the hands of their 'own' and had witnessed the strength of the British Army — through its discipline, organization and the conduct of the British officers towards their men. They were not so

keen to have chaos again — a truck for Pindhari and Rohila hordes under the leadership of free looters and cut-throats. They wanted peace and stability which could hardly come under the leadership of the old king of Delhi, himself a prisoner of old age and circumstances.

I often wondered why the new fort built by Akbar Ali Khan my ancestor was of mud — really thick mud. He had abandoned the big pukka (solid) fort at Nurgarh, a few miles away to the south on the road to Rajputana. The old fort at Pataudi was razed to the ground by the mutineers in 1857. Could it be that he had seen the fort at Hansi, an old fort, of thick mud which had withstood many a siege.

Perron is another outstanding case who rose from the lower deck of a French frigate who within his own territories — and those which he had subjugated for his master the Scindia — ruled like a sovereign with the power of life and death, and beyond his boundaries, where he was paramount through titular authority of the aged Mughal Emperor, who was virtually his prisoner. Perron is particularly interesting because he jumped up with riches and power; he even allowed himself to be persuaded by sycophants to send an ambassador to Napoleon — M. Desoatee. These are the days of brilliant Tippu the son of yet another brilliant soldier Haider Ali who was asked to take over the throne of Mysore by the people. They both, father and son, hated the British, knowing them to be the real enemies after the destruction of the French, after Dupliex.

This is the time when after the defeat of Kardala in 1795 the Nizam of Hyderabad had fallen from being one of the leading powers in the Deccan to a tributary of the Marhattas. But Perron was not the man of brilliance according to his boss de Boigne, he had plenty of bull but not so much brain. Had there been one of de Boigne type at that moment to co-ordinate plans with Tippu Sultan of Mysore whose motto was, 'Better to live two days like a tiger than two centuries like a lamb', I wonder what kind of history we would have read. But then of course a new Governor-General had arrived in April 1798 Lord Morrington (afterwards the Marquis Wellesley) — who reversed the policy of neutrality in political relations with the native powers that had been followed by the administration of his predecessor, Sir John Shore.

History of all Princes must be read in the atmosphere that prevailed at the time when they made their start. Emperor Aurangzeb died in 1707 but his descendants occupied the Red Fort 'palace' at Delhi for a 150 years after him. He must have left some solid basic structure behind, for it to totter on for one and a half century before the mast which flew the Taimur standard of bull horns and tail fell, and Hodson replaced it with the Union Jack on the 20 September 1857.

The history of most of these Princes has a modest beginning, if not humble. But then history begins and hinges on things of little consequence. The history of Bhopal is the history of its outstanding women rulers, starting from the very first Fateh Bibi the wife of Dost Mohammad Khan who with a dozen men or so laid the foundation in the middle of nowhere in Central India — Malwa — early in the eighteenth century.

These were the days when Wellesley had decided to destroy the most dangerous thorn in the side of the British in India — Tippu Sultan of Mysore. In their ambitious plans of expanding their trade to the maximum in this subcontinent, in this great Peg of India which was stuck in the Indian Ocean, their command of the sea made this possible and for the first time they used their native troops, in large numbers, bound together by steel strands of their own British ones, led by young, ambitious, adventurous officers singing: Rule Britannia.

The British were now at war with Holkar. He had refused to join the confederacy, intending to join only when the Scindia's power had been reduced to his

own. Jaswant Rao Holkar was a master Machiavellian. Like all Holkars he was a great advocate of the predatory system of warfare. He had warned his confederates against pitched battle with the English, advising them rather to conserve their infantry and guns under the protection of their forts, and to operate exclusively with their light cavalry, advising it to devastate the Company's provinces and to prevent supplies from reaching the English armies in the field. This advice was his sole contribution to the Marhatta cause. While the confederates were staking their ally for Maharashtra, he was ravaging Malwa, collecting 100 lakhs from Mandsaur alone.

It is interesting to note Haider Ali was the only one to appreciate the part of the Navy in the battle of India. He tried to start his own but was too late, death took him away first and his son was never given the peace to be able to concentrate on building a sea force, especially when the British were already so strong in the area and commanded the seas. The Nizam regretted not having a port of his own in 1947 to claim contiguity with Britain the Ally through the sea. It is the people with vision and audacity that win in the end.

Nothing succeeds like success and in the East at least, no one comes to help in a reversal. Morson, one of his Governors was refused provision at Kotah, by the Raja, who would have nothing to do with him. He then made his way towards Bhopal and was given full aid — a thing that the British never forgot and when the time came made Bhopal the Muslim wedge between the territories of Holkar, and Scindia Marhatta — when they became the Indore and Gwalior states. Bhopal was given precedence and importance quite out of proportion to its size. It was because of the area in which it lay and expanded — dividing the two leading Marhatta Rulers' territories in which the indigenous population were all non-Marhattas.

Bhopal's history is the history of all these uplands. The rulers of this comparatively small state proved that they were people of substance and that their friendship could be relied upon.

Let me describe very briefly the atmosphere that prevailed around the Red Fort — from where Octorloney led his division of the army to Rajputana to humble Amir Khan Pathan in Hasting's great drive to destroy the Pindharis.

Another personality with whom my ancestors must have enjoyed their evenings of native dances by nauch girls and singing of Persian and native poetry in Delhi was Hyder Hearsey. He, after the death of George Thomas, the Irish Raja, had made a name for himself settling the Bareily district, of now-a-days U.P. He drove the Gorkha invaders from the Terai boundary with Oudh, again today's U.P. and explored the sources of the Ganges river. He married Princess Zahur-un-Nisa, a daughter of one of the deposed princes of Cambay, one of the ancestors of the present Skinner of Hansi and one of his progeny commanded Skinner Horse of present day Indian Army, 1961.

Hyder Hearsey's close associate was Colonel William Lasinaus Gardner, who like Skinner had raised a Corps of irregular cavalry known as Gardner's House. He was the nephew of the first Lord Gardner and was at one time in the service of Holkar. He was married to Manzil-un-Nisa, the elder sister of Hyder's wife. A condition of the treaty he negotiated on behalf of Holkar was for her hand in marriage — he had been captivated by her eyes, above her veil when he had gone to her father's house on this mission from Holkar.

As a result of their marriage both Hearsey and Gardner had acquired considerable estates under the firman (royal mandate) from the Emperor Akbar Shah, whose niece was married to Gardner's son William James.

Such was the mosaic of society of the Delhi of those days in which my ancestors also lived in their 'Kalan Mahal' and in properties in Darya Gunj, along the river which had a common wall with the Red Fort Palace. Alas, the only thing that remains of that glory today is the Zeenut-ul-Masajid, a mosque built by Aurangzeb's daughter, that stood towering over the Jamna Gate — the gate through the battlement wall of Shahjahanabad — the city built by Emperor Shahjahan — the palace builder leading to the river. The gate has gone to make room for modern traffic, an ever increasing nightmare in the never-ending, increasing population of Delhi. Even the old river has moved away from the battlements to a distance where it can hardly be seen and then as a trickle of water and not the river of romance it used to be. Its old bed is now occupied by the burning ghats of the VVIP's of India.

The Delhi that I am talking of is the Delhi of Bahadur Shah, the old Emperor in name, a Pensioner of the British.

It was Delhi, redolent of its gay past, in the twilight. The Emperor was old, living in tattered glory, squeezing bukhsheesh (charity) in the form of nazzars from visiting British officers and high nobles who resided in Delhi.

Some of the finest brains in the Company's service had been sent to Delhi and with exception, they came to stay. The legendary Octorlony, of Nepal fame, had built many mansions in the classical Mughal style and lived in the style of a Mughal nobleman. His successor for a second term of office was the great Sir Charles Metcalfe, who preferred travelling by elephant instead of horseback so that he could read on the move — mainly Persian literature. He spent his weekends at a retreat in the Shalamar Gardens outside Delhi, where his Indian family lived in Mughal style.

These names are mentioned because they were the ones who were the brains and were negotiating with the native rulers and it was on their opinion and advice that Calcutta usually acted and signed treaties or gave Sanads to the native rulers. The Marquis of Wellesley had gone, the Directors were not impressed by the conquests as the coffers were empty; the wars had cost a great deal and even then they did not believe in an empire in India. They wanted peace, so that they could trade in style and make money. So the old Marquis Cornwallis came back again, to bring peace, but was dead within three months. His successor, Sir George Barlow, the senior member of the Council adopted all his predecessor's principles of caution, economy and conciliation.

It was in that spirit that an arrangement was made with Scindia, on terms favourable to him, and now although Holkar had been completely defeated, Lord Lake was directed to extend to him the same indulgence.

It was in this mood that the service of Bhopal had been recognized and the area of this Muslim Chief had been extended to form a wedge between these two great Marhatta Houses who had been suspicious of one another from the very beginning of their humble origins when both became Deputy Peshwas under the weakening influence of the Peshwa at Poona. Lake fully supported the service of Bhopal when Morson was stranded with his dwindling force in the unfriendly jungles of Malwa.

To understand the history of Bhopal one has to go into the happenings of the areas of Central India referred to as the Period of Calamity. As stated earlier Bhopal was ravaged by Pindharis in 1795, under the Raja of Berar who was at war with the Muslim rulers of Bhopal; a durrah (Hord) of the Pindharis caused so much damage that 25 years later Malcolm in 1852 reported that Bhopal still had not recovered from the effects of the visitation.

The Marhatta Chiefs had shown no gratitude to the British after their defeat in 1805-6. They were reflecting with hatred and had experienced no sense of calamity

from the war. No sooner was the ink dry on their treaties than they were back to the old game of intrigue and loot khasoot (plunder and grab).

The Peshwa had been put back on the throne in Poona in 1803 under the control of a British Resident but in 1813 was intriguing and his outrages brought him to the verge of hostilities with the British. Scindia, the Deputy Peshwa and the Peshwa were indulging in treacherous correspondence to throw off the British yoke. Holkar and the Raja of Berar were up to their eyes in anti-British activities.

The only one loyal in the area was the Chief of Bhopal, an Afghan Muslim ruling House and further south the loyal Nizam.

It was in this context that they became the No. 1 and No. 2 Muslim States of India, because after the Emperor Aurangzeb the power that emerged was the Marhatta confederacy. They played havoc in the North, Malwa and Rajputana. They were bitter against the Rajputs because they left them to be defeated by Ahmed Shah Abdali (the Afghan invader) at Panipat in 1761 and destroyed their dreams of a Hindu Raj.

They employed the Pindharis as their auxiliary force and used them to devastate and ruin each other's territories. This made the Pindharis a power on their own. In 1810 when Karim Khan and another Pindhari Chief named Chitu joined Amir Khan in a brief, unstable confederacy, their combined hordes of 60,000 caused a sensation throughtout India.

The Marquis of Hastings, soon after his appointment in November 1812, realized the necessity of suppressing the Pindharis as a prerequisite for the establishment of peace and security in the country as a whole. The Court of Directors finally realized the extent of the menace and sanctioned an all-out offensive against the Pindharis. Hastings realized that this would mean a head-on collision with the Marhatta powers. But since another war in any case was inevitable, the risk was accepted.

He decided to undertake a big cavalry operation against the Pindharis — fast moving operation by an organized force against another fast moving, but disorganized force, who did not stand up to a determined enemy specially when it was the invincible British legend. He started his operations in December 1816, by a series of coordinated moves from all directions of the territory where the Pindharis were concentrated and slowly closed the net on them. No quarter was to be given and they were to be exterminated.

These pincer movements by major columns were supported by detached forces acting as stop-gaps and garrison established at strong-points dotted about operational areas for internal security. To this end two main armies were organized — one in the Deccan under Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Hislop, with a Gujrat Division under Maj. Gen. Sir William Kerr and another Army in Hindustan (north of Chambal) of four divisions with two in reserve under the personal command of the Governor-General the Marquis of Hastings himself.

A total of over 80,000 regular foot, 10,000 regular cavalry and over 20,000 irregular cavalry was involved. All were to take up their prearranged positions on the periphery of Central India and on the given signal the concerted movements were to begin.

Against them the Marhatta confederacy had mobilized over 100,000 horse, over 80,000 foot and no less than 600 guns.

It was a great undertaking considering the variety of terrain, the great distances separating the Divisions and the problems of administration, communications and maintenance involved. Complete secrecy was impossible in the south but in the north of Bundhelkhand great secrecy was enforced and a number of false moves were made in surrounding districts so as not to alarm Scindia, the biggest in the

area, until he found himself at such a disadvantage that he would think twice before risking a confrontation.

In the good weather of mid-October Hastings suddenly proclaimed that he was advancing to exterminate the Pindharis and in order to rule out any excuses for obstruction or prevarication on the part of the native powers, he declared neutrality would not be tolerated. He made a swift thrust towards Gwalior where Scindia was encamped with the best of his infantry and artillery. The move caught them by surprise and forced them to sign a treaty by which they were required to place their troops at the disposal of the British Government.

With this move came the move by Metcalfe (the famous Sir Charles) who sent his 2nd Corps to the 4th Division of the Deccan Army, to confuse the enemy, left his 3rd Corps to protect Delhi and with 1st Corps himself joined Major General Sir David Ochterlony who had lately distinguished himself in the Gorkha war and was in command of the 4th Division of the Grand Army of Hindustan. One had taken up a position near Rewari — 10 miles south of Pataudi.

The specific object of these moves was to encourage and move the Rajput States who had been invited to an alliance that would free them forever from the onslaught of predatory armies — Pindharis the free looters of the Marhattas, in return for a portion of their revenue at the price of protection. Ochterlony had orders to overcome Amir Khan the Pathan Pindhari Amir who had 20,000 horse and 8,000 foot, mostly Pathans and had not signed any agreement but following Scindia's defection from the Marhattas cause. Amir Khan had signified his desire to follow that chief's example. And this envoy had accepted the terms offered, namely a jagir of 12 lakhs a year with British protection, provided the Pathan Chief disbanded his followers, abandoned all connections with the free looters and gave up his 200 guns for which he would get 5 lakhs of rupees as compensation.

The terms were generous. The crafty Pathan was eagerly watching events at Poona and Nagpur, but Ochterlony was not a man to be trifled with and advanced on the Pathan Army which was then in Jaipur State. The British Division encamped near Jaipur City. Here negotiations were re-opened and a meeting was arranged between Ochterlony and the Chief. The place agreed upon was a village nine miles equidistant from their two camps. Both Amir Khan and Ochterlony were mounted on elephants. As the elephants were brought alongside each other for the two to shake hands, the bodyguard in the howdah behind Amir Khan held a cocked pistol aimed at the General's chest and the horsemen were all ready with their lit matches on their matchlocks.

After a few exchanges the Amir called out 'Challo, chalo', (go on, go on) and the two elephants separated. Soon Amir Khan came to a settlement with the British. He was given some territories from Jaipur and became the Nawab of Tonk.

Thus perished the human locust for ever.

Baji Rao Peshwa surrendered to Malcolm on 3rd June, 1818 and the man-hunt was over.

It is in this context that we must see the birth of these numerous principalities in the area. Barlow had been right when he said that native states would exhaust each other with internal wars and disputes. But this had provided no real security, it was now decided to adopt the alternative policy of undetaking the control of all the states, with an open assertion and assumption of paramount sovereignty and full acceptance by the British, of their obligations.

With the choice between that and anarchy, no ruler who had the option, refused to co-operate. Anarchy had gone full circle, so that even those who subsisted by plundering their neighbours had begun to feel the repercussions of a continued state of uncertainty and alarm. The rulers saw in the end the sense of

surrendering part of their sovereignty to a common guardian to whom they could appeal, and in whose strength, good faith and integrity they could safely repose.

Upon that principle were based the peace treaties and engagements, and scores of these were negotiated, with all manner of people, from the highest princes of the land, down to head-men of wild aboriginal groups who took their historic documents away wrapped in their loin cothes.

Those who had served the British well were rewarded, like Bhopal and the Rajput states, which were gradually relieved of paying tributes, and in some cases given gifts of land. But 'others', the enemies were treated according to their deserts. Holkar reduced from independence to being one of the Company's dependent allies, besides being made to surrender large tracts of land to the Rajputs, disband his army and maintain instead a British force.

From these shambles came the pattern of princely states that one saw in the map in Rajputana, the Central Indian Native States which consisted mainly of Gwalior territory of 75,000 square miles.

In Malwa the main ones were Indore and Bhopal. Then there was the Bhopal Agency in which there was Rajgarh and Narsinghgarh. I knew the rulers of both. Then the Western Malwa Agency which contained Jaora and Rutlam. Then Bhopawar Agency which had Ali Rajpur, Bharwani, Dhar and Jhakua. Then came the Bundhelkhand states which contained Ajaigarh, Dutia and Panna, whom I knew. And his sister, Her Highness the Maharani of Rajpipla and Gujrat. Particularly when she came to Mussoori every year chaperoned by Ma Sahib. In Bhaghelkhand (Bhagel—lion or tiger, Khand—land or area), Rewa was the biggest and the ruler was at school with me in the RIMC, Dhera Dun. Then came those who were under Central Provinces. Then there was another category of Sambalpur states attached to the British District of Sambalpur, in the east of the Central Provinces — 7 of them with an area of 11,897 square miles; then the Raipur states — which lie to the West of Sambalpur. That is very briefly the pattern that emerged in Central India when the dust settled down and the vultures had cleared the flesh and bones.

I have not given the list of Rajputana states as they were many and of ancient origins who had been ravaged by the Marhattas. The only Muslim state in it was Tonk which came into being in 1817 when Amir Khan of Pindharis fame bowed his sword to the British and they gave him parts of land which Jaipur had usurped in his enthusiasm from others, in the chaos that prevailed at the time. I knew the ruler who always told us amusing stories of his father who used to imagine, in old age, that he had taken off from the prayer mat and his cronies took full advantage of it.

I knew a number of rulers in Rajputana and one of my best friends was of Jodhpur and I hope I will have more to say about it when I have finished with Bhopal which has gone into oblivion in this story, what with Marhattas and Pindharis. But if it hadn't been for these two elements then we may never have heard of Bhopal and its Begums in the form that we did. Bhopal was created by the British as the Muslim wedge in Central India between Scindia (Gwalior) and Holkar (Indore) state, which were established after the hydra.

I must now get back to Bhopal and my friend Princess Abida Sultan. She and I were about the same age. As time moved so did our friendship. One took these relationships in one's stride and bothered little why one behaved the way one did. It was only during the hours of boredom in the war that one had time to reflect on such subjects. Those who have never tasted war in the actual front line would be surprised to learn that war is 75% boredom and only 25% actual action in which bullets and other items that could kill fly around indiscriminately. On one of my

flying weekend holidays to Calcutta I had picked up one or two books of history of hurly burly days of the British fighting the Marhattas after polishing off Tippu Sultan in Mysore. Some interesting episodes are described by an observer of the events and it was during this study that I started to appreciate the qualities of the women rulers and Begums of Bhopal and had a chance to understand why my friend Abida Sultan behaved the way she did, she must have read the history of her family carefully. She was very proud of it.

I found that intellectually she and I had quite a lot in common. As I got to know her better the more I admired her. She was a lovely person in many ways. She had had an arranged marriage. She was betrothed at the age of six, which was according to her grandmother's wishes, the ruler of the time. Her 'Nikkah' (formal marriage contract) had taken place but the 'vidaigi' (farewell of bride) took place after the death of her grandmother. She did not stay long at her husband's place, Kurwai, a small state in Bhopal Agency. Her only child, a son (Shahriyar Muhammad Khan) was born in 1932. She brought him to Bhopal soon after his birth and never went back. Her husband married again, and had many children from his new marriage but Abida remained legally married as No. 1 wife to the Nawab of Kurwai. He passed away only the other day.

She lived in a charming palace-cum-villa at the western end of the ridge on which Ahmadabad Palace was built by her great grandfather. The view from this position was marvellous any time of the year or the day. The western end of the big Bhopal Lake could be seen from every room of the house. I stood for many minutes if not hours leaning against the pillars of the verandah facing west and a covered walk leading from it to the edge of the rock above the swimming pool below, watching the colours of the water of the lake change as the sun moved slowly on its rounds over the low hills that surrounded the lake. I watched this panorama at sunrise, at sunset, in pitch darkness, bright moonlight, in thunder and lightning storms, in that undecided light when white clouds beat their retreat in semi-military formations, and then also in the stillness and quiet of darkness when nothing moves and even a distant whisper can be heard. This place has left a strange and special mark on my memory of a different beauty of this part of the world, — Central India, a mixture of hills and jungles, ravines and lakes, and stretches of rolling hills with open spaces where aerodromes could be built and have been built, where animals lived in abundance specially its long-striped tigers and few human beings came in sight, to add to the peace of this area, that one yearns for so much these days in over-populated places.

I used to enjoy those solitary moments of that strange beauty of Asia or the orient or of the East. Whatever one might like to term those areas where I was born. I have travelled a great deal — and so on such occasions I used to reflect on other beautiful scenery of high mountains and snow and mighty rivers in far distant lands that produced awe but one still enjoyed it because it was beauty of a kind which could only be seen, absorbed and felt but not described in words. By the touch of a hand, perhaps by a look in the eyes or even a smile, when words fail. One of those beauties that can be imagined to be anything — a single knot of a ribbon or a delicate subtle gown, or a decoration, a clump of trees hugging together on a small pool in the middle of a vast pasture, or a broken column in the scattered hills where only a shepherd played the flute — where he could imagine anything he wished in this beautiful space and wilderness. Beauty relies on a number of things, be it skin or hair, figure, gait, voice, eyes, hands and feet and that distant look which is not aware of beauty apparent or hidden. And that smile on the face speaks more through the eyes than the mouth. Beauty, be it of East or West, is beauty. Good music need not be understood to be enjoyed, good scenery is the

same — good, but the appreciation of it depends on the mood of the person and the company in which all this is recorded and felt. Yet another spot, is a lonely tree and a small bay with small boats, all quite peaceful and happy, in a world of their own, undisturbed by modern transport. All this gives the desired note and wakes the spirit. Nurus Saba palace stood high in this atmosphere.

As I write I remember the moments when I stood there on occasion, entranced in a world of my own, thinking of nothing in particular but the mind wandering in search of something, not quite sure what, when the voice of Abida would be heard, saying no more than just, 'Sher...', from just behind me when she had arrived in her rubber slippers quite unnoticed. Just this one word — my name — would break the spell and I would look around and see her more from the eyes than the lips, asking the question without actually speaking — 'What are you thinking?' And I would just turn and say nothing but an 'O' and start the converation by some harmless remark — to change the mood and avoid the answer to the question to which there was never really an answer.

It was not easy for a young, attractive, intelligent woman who had been brought up, from the moment she started recognizing things and people around her, that one day she was going to be the ruler of Bhopal, to behave like 'others' — normal beings. In fact as our friendship developed a lot of eyebrows were raised but protocol and strict palace etiquette did not allow the movement of curious eyes to encourage tongues to waggle like they normally do in ordinary circumstances. One main reason for this was that His Highness himself gave the impression that he rather liked the developing friendship; for those who have no experience of states, it is important to know that in that world there is only one God — the ruler. If the sun is shining bright in the sky and His Highness happens to be in the mood to remark that clouds will be building up and we can expect rain soon, someone will be heard to remark that he had heard the thunder and the next one would say that far in the distance over the hills he saw flash of lightning and it wouldn't be long before one of those present would slip quietly but with enough movement to ensure that His Highness had noticed it, and then come quickly back and sit down, and when sooner or later the question would be asked, 'Why did you go?' He would say with folded hands in all humility that he thought he had heard rain drops outside. No one would laugh and the whole thing would be taken seriously confirming that His Highness' far reaching observation about the rain, in the clear sky, was not just an idiotic remark. In such an atmosphere it required a saint to remain normal. I sometimes thought that she was one, because in spite of Bia Hazoor, Bia Hazoor (Your gracious, your gracious) all round her she, to me, seemed a very normal person — and an attractive woman, with short hair, dressed more like a man than a woman, with sparkling eyes and a most captivating smile. She said little, most of her speaking was done through her eyes. It did not take long to find out that she missed nothing, but said nothing either.

She was short, but not so for our part of the world, with wheat-coloured skin. She had obviously developed her body to a masculine scale because of the exercises she had done, to copy her father, in building his body and arms to cope with the polo stick and the game of polo with ease. He was a world famous polo player rated at nine goals. She had managed to reach a good three rating. She rode hard both when playing on horses or on bicycles. She was very good with a bicycle. I remember a collision she had with her father on the palace cycle polo ground — both went up in the air, fell on the hard ground, dusted their bottoms, smiled at each other, and asked simultaneously, 'Are you all right?' In spite of this rough use with her hands they were sensitive and her figure was slim. She was slight but strong. She did not have an ounce of superfluous flesh on her.

Once she was playing and I was sitting on the side line, she dismounted from the pony and was coming towards me and caught me watching her closely. Coming near me she asked, 'What are you watching so carefully?' I had replied, 'The movements of a thorough-bred on and off the polo ground'. She gave a full smile both with lips and eyes but said nothing. Later when taking me back to Flagstaff House, looking straight, with both eyes on the road and hands on the steering wheel said, 'Well selected words — there were so many watching and awaiting to hear what you would say — thank you'. I replied without turning towards her but watching the road sitting on her side 'Lucky you were riding that beautiful mare'. We both smiled and she took the salute of the sentry on the gates. She dropped me and rushed to have a shower and change. She was to pick me up in half an hour to take me to the palace to see Her Highness — her mother.

Her Highness was a Suddozai Pathan of royal blood. She had been brought to Bhopal with all her family, which meant more than just parents and brothers and sisters, practically her entire clan was moved to Bhopal and all of them had been granted lands and jobs in the State. She had been selected to be the future wife of the baby son, favourite of Her Highness Sultan Jahan Begum, the ruler of Bhopal, the ruler I knew, the polo player, Nawab Hamidullah Khan. He had come into this world 17 years after his senior brothers and was younger than his eldest brother's (the heir-apparent) two sons. Her Highness Maimuna Sultana was a lovely person in every sense of the word with such a lovely name — Maimuna, she had to be.

Her tutoring had been done under the eyes of her mother-in-law to be, from a very tender age. She spoke English beautifully and was a master of Persian, Pushtu and Urdu. Her manners were the standards of perfection for a Princess and Queen to be. She was a model of elegance and charm. She was fair, as fair as Pathans can be, but with a touch of that colour that only comes when tempered by so many ages of the Sun. She spoke, as queens do, with the poise that comes from confidence, and good upbringing and that something which has to be heard and watched; it is beyond explanation, we called her Beva, (Mam).

That evening we were to go to Sadar Manzil Palace in the city, there was some State function at which both, His and Her Highness were going. I went with Abida and Their Highnesses came in a two-seater Mercedez with His Highness at the wheel. It was a good sight to see them together like this in public. I sat in the back seat with Abida, and others from the Palace, while the function was being conducted in the huge hall. Most of my time was spent in watching and listening to the string band that was playing, up in the music gallery, of his well proportioned huge hall. I wondered who had selected the music and later found out that it was Her Highness, who was an accomplished pianist. No one talked, because I noted that we were supposed to be at some recital function — to this day I am not aware of what it was all about. But it left a mark on me, because of this shaking of hands and music — in the middle of the Peg, of this great subcontinent of India and playing foreign music so beautifully. Chopin's soul must have been happy to have his music played so well, so far away. No one was dancing to these scores but there was an atmosphere of dignity and elegance and the quiet of the East that the music sounded as if it had been written for the occasion. So, were East and West so different, that they could not meet? Love has no language, it also doesn't need it. My mind was going back to my friend in England, who also loved music — she died a few months back. She would have loved to have been present on this occasion. She was fascinated by the East — fascination of the unknown. But must we know everything about everything? I was gripped by the music. I was thousands of miles away in Paris and Berlin, and Prague and Warsaw where I had heard this before. But I had remembered it because of the company in which I had heard it

— my friend who is now no more. Life is nothing more than an association of human beings, based on basic ingredients of love, affection and understanding. Love is an idea, a feeling and not a thing. The music of love that was playing had taken me back a few years to far away places. I remember sitting there gazing around me, at nothing in particular, quite surprised at being there, as normally I avoided functions but my friend had asked me to come, and I could not refuse her. I was glad I had come. I had never seen this beautiful hall from inside, one had just passed the palace in a car and took it for granted that it had the things that a palace is supposed to have. But this music was such a surprise. I had never had this experience in any other state before. There they had native musicians, of very high quality but also sometimes with very high pitched voices which ears did not take well to. While I was wandering I suddenly noticed that some eyes were following me, of ladies who had come in attendance on Her Highness, the so many 'Bias'. They noticed I was bored with the function and particularly the music and had quickened the pace of eating and chewing the 'pan' — betel leaf with lime bark of a special tree called Katha and betel nut chopped up and mixed with scented tobacco a potent combination of items that could send the head swirling if you were not used to it.

Abida by this time had noticed the eyes of these ladies on me and bent over and quickly asked me, 'What are they so curious about?' 'About you and me I think. You were absorbed in watching what is going on and I trying to listen to this beautiful music, in this elegant hall wasted on most of the audience and being sneered at by the red mouthed ladies in front'. She gave a smile and said, 'You have had to endure it only today, think of me who has to listen to it so often'. 'The price you pay for your being privileged as it must be wonderful to be just one of the crowd sometimes, to be able to see what one wants to and do what one wants to, and with someone one wants to be, without being seen, or talked about, being noticed. What fun it must be'. Before I had time to reply, Their Highnesses got up and so we all were on our feet, soon following them to our cars.

Her car was following their's but we left them at the palace gates and turned right to go to her Residence. 'Where are you dining?' She asked, 'Anywhere', my reply was in an absent-minded way, being still somewhere on the banks of the Danube with sounds of Viennese Waltz in my head and ears. 'I will change the car. We both need fresh air I think. We can think of dinner afterwards'. This required no reply. I was happy with the suggestion.

We got into her two-seater, an Oldsmobile a favourite car of hers, and she drove through her gates, passing the palace on our right, past the Zanana Deorhi (the entrance gate to the Ladies palace), through the main gate to the palace's right towards the fort built by the Founder of the state, past Minto Hall named after the Viceroy.

My friend spoke, 'You seem to be in deep thought. What are you thinking about?' 'Lady Minto,' I said quite unconsciously. 'Lady Minto? did you know her, you weren't born then'. 'Yes I know, this building reminded me of her, and what she did and said decades ago, which seems to be coming true'. 'You mean the demand for a separate Muslim homeland in the subcontinent', 'Yes — and all that was to follow'. 'What?' She asked quite firmly. By this time we had turned right round the lake and were climbing up to the Simla Pahari (Simla Hill) — as this ridge was called, after Simla where the headquarters of the Government of India moved for the summer and the House a palace really of 'General Sahib' the late Prince Obeidullah Khan was located where his two sons resided. She seemed to know the roads backwards and was soon parking the car on a spot from where



The Begum of Bhopal (Sultan Jahan Begum in her early age - 1892)



H.H. Bhopal on 'Dot'. A Polo player of international repute, with a handicap of 9 described by the 'Sphere', 'One of the greatest players of all times'



His Highness Hamidullah Khan Nawab of Bhopal



Princess Sajida Sultan No. 2 daughter of Nawab Hamidullah Khan who became the Begum of Pataudi in April 1939 and later at the demise of her father took the title of the Nawab Begum of Bhopal. Here seen with His Highness Sayaji Rao II, the Gaikowar of Baroda and Maharani Sahiba (Baro Ma) at the 1936 Olympic Games in Munich Germany.

Princess Abida Sultan (No. 1 daughter of Nawab Hamidullah Khan) at 4





Abida's Nashra Ceremony (Quran finished with translation) 1918. Sajida (No. 2) next behind her, Rabia (No. 3) in Centre of the Picture



Abida on a poney - 1920 Bhopal (with Chaman Singh - her riding master) at the age of 8 years

In England 1925 - Hyde Park - London. Abida in the Centre - Sajida and Rabia - the three sisters



Abida 13 - 14, engaged to be married



Abida and her son Shahriyar



Abida with Bubbles (Shahriyar Mohammad Khan) 1937 England



Abida in riding kit





Round Table Conference of 1930 showing the opening with the Prime Minister Mr. Ramsay Mac Donald in Chair and on his right Maharaja of Alwar, Gaikowar of Baroda and the Nawab of Bhocal (Hamidullah Khan)



Nawab of Pataudi - Rolling for Fun



The Nawab of Pataudi Mohammad Iftikhar Ali Khan (Pat) at Nets 1946 (when he captained the Indian Cricket Team)



Tiger Pataudi in Rawalpindi, he captained the Rawalpindi Club Cricket Team - his Uncle - Author, is on his left.



Nawab Sir Amir - ud - Din Ahmad Khan of Loharu (My Maternal Grandfather) who defended the case of succession of Bhopal for the Senior Branch of the family (Son's of Late Heir Apparent when Her Highness wanted her youngest son Hamidullah Khan to succeed her - her elder sons - with two sons each, having died in her life time)



The three representatives of the Princes, the present Maharajas of Dhrangadhara and Baroda and the Begum of Bhopal, meet in New Delhi in the summer of 1970 in a vain effort to reach a compromise with the government over the ending of the Privy Purses

H.H.Bhopal's Birthday Parade Commanded by Princess Abida Sultan Col.of the Gohar-e-Taj 11th January 1944



Left to right: Capt. Greenwood (A.D.C. to C - in - C), H.H.Bhopal, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck the Commander in Chief in India, Maj. Gen. C.O Harvey adviser for Indian state affairs, Princess Abida Sultan Col.of the Battalian who commanded the Parade, Brig. Sir Hisamuddin Commander of Bhopal State Forces, Lady Auchinleck, On her left standing, Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, in between these two can be seen the head of Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur, Extreme right sitting, Her H. the Begum of Bhopal



Princess Abida Sultan with Sikandar Mirza (The Governor General of Pakistan at Karachi in 1957)



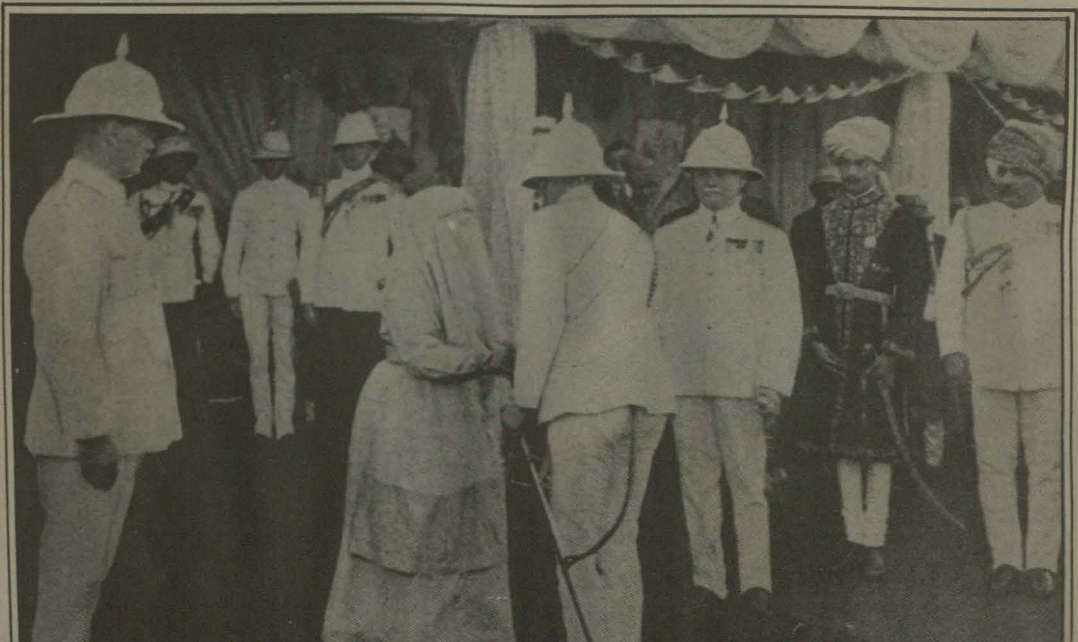
Her Highness with the Prince in the state landau.



A Group Photograph after the polo match, three girls from left to right Princess Sajida, Princess Abida, Princess Rabia.



Prince Joining the three cheers in honour of Begum Bhopal after the polo match.



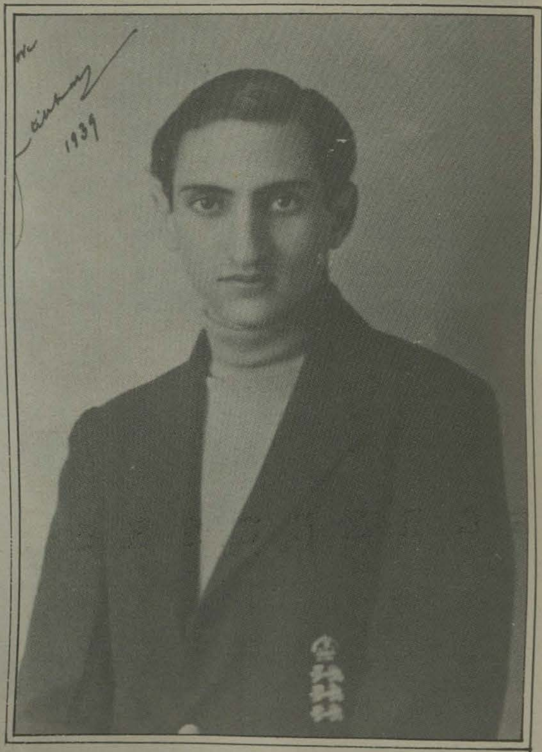
Her Highness receiving the Prince at Bhopal railway station.



Her Highness and Prince in Sudar Manzil palace-Bhopal.



The Instilation of Nawab of Loharu (Amin ud Din Ahmad Khan) sitting on the left of the A. G. G with his grandfather (Amir ud Din Ahmad Khan) on the A. G. G's right. His grandfather had abdicated in favour of his son who died in his lifetime and he therefore again had his grandson installed in the Guddi. Loharu being too small and restricted for him.



The Nawab of Pataudi



The Begum of Pataudi



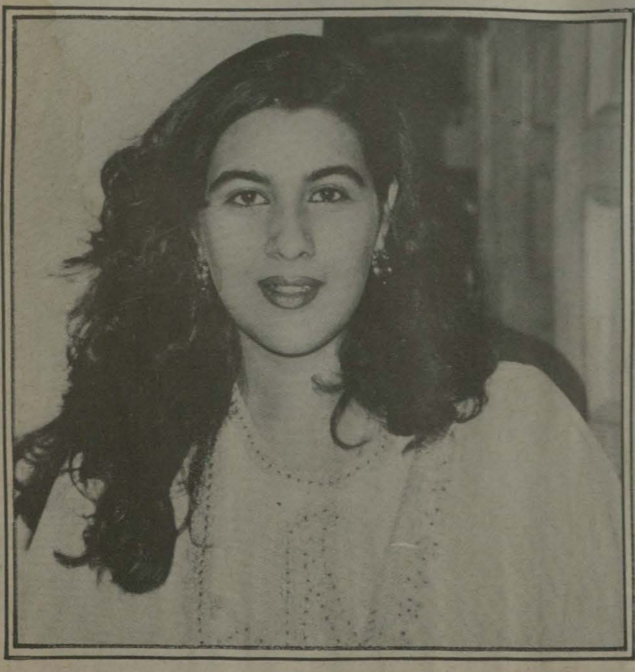
Nawab Mansoor Ali Khan of Pataudi (Tiger)



Ayesha Sultan of Pataudi (Shermila Tagore)

Saif (The only son of the Nawab of Patudi)





Aziza the Begum of Saif

one could see the city and the palace of Ahmadabad and all the houses on the other side clearly.

Neither of us spoke for quite a while, I absorbed in my thoughts and now enchanted by this view that spread before me in the dark and she having lit a cigarette and playing about with the smoke as most people do who are not smokers but do it when they are lost for words or are concentrating on something far away through smoke. She broke the silence, 'I hope this smoke is not disturbing you?' 'Not at all. I am used to chain smokers and chain drinkers'. 'And yet you do neither'. 'That is right — no minor vices'. She looked at me and smiled. She had a beautiful smile. At that age everything is beautiful.

But the view in front was such that it was disturbing. I had thrown my head back on the folded hood of the car and she bent more to the right to keep me clear of the smoke or to keep clear of me. A minute seemed an hour. She spoke first again, 'What are you saying?' 'O, nothing, just these lines of Wordsworth —

"And we are left, or shall be left alone;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe."

She was ready for this, 'Great poet, but who are we and who is the foe?' I replied, 'I still don't know. Could be you and me. Or someone else and you or someone else and me. The Foe — the foe could perhaps be the circumstances that would arise when religion will be used to fulfil our political ends?' She was quiet for a bit, deep in thought and then said, 'By whom.' 'By the political Pandits and political Mullas, all in the name of Humanity, Peace, Democracy, making a mockery of these expressions — for self interests'. I paused. She was now resting the back of her head on the folded canvas hood. I had got my head off it and was trying to absorb all these lights of the palaces and city and the houses on the bank of the lake like lamp on a divali night. But there was something more to this than that. Some of these lights were reflecting in the clear and calm waters of the lake like a beautiful person getting the reflection of the body in a crystal mirror — the mirror lit in a dark room furnished with water coloured carpets with weed like patterns on them and the boulders on the side of the lake represented by huge cushions on which one could jump from the ceiling and feel nothing leave alone jumping and playing on them with the naked body. It is such a relief to be able to imagine what one wants to imagine at the time.

She turned the key in the car. The engine purred. 'Have you taken in enough?' 'Yes, to last a lifetime'. 'A happy one can seem a short one', she said with a mild touch of a sigh. 'Better a short happy one than a long miserable one', I replied. 'I agree and that is why one should make the most of the opportunities offered or allowed by nature'. The car had come down the hill and we were about to pass the Minto Hall again. She was driving quite fast now. I spoke again, 'Hungry?' 'No. I was just trying to catch more breeze in my face to wake me up from my dream'. 'Pleasant one or a nightmare?' I asked. She replied, it seemed weighing every word, 'Happy ones produce sad memories and sad ones are difficult to forget'. 'Which means that the results of both are the same' I said. 'So I have been dreaming. You don't like dreamers.' 'What do I like?' was the snap question. 'O, you are one of those who takes everything in her stride. Rough ride here, mild ride there — you know what I mean?' 'No I don't, I am afraid'. 'Why afraid?' 'Because of hearing the truth from the only person capable of giving it to me'.

'Thank you for the compliment. But it doesn't pay to be too truthful at times'. She was sharp to retaliate. 'I hope these are not those times and the payment is measured differently'. I had met my match. No wonder I was attracted to her. But she was an attractive woman, she had the edge on me. But then I thought, may be not, she was a princess, and an heir to a throne on top of that, and I, a simple

soldier. She could equal me in many things I thought but not when it came to taking chances. But I had to be careful with my questions — she answered them by counter-questions. Why not? I thought. She was only two and half months younger than me. As all this was flashing through my mind she was speeding towards Flag Staff House. Then she spoke again. 'Do you want something to eat?' 'I want to live, to get to know you', was all I said. She roared with laughter, passed the sentry at the gate at some speed and swung in front of the marble stairs and brought the car to a halt like a well-trained polo pony. We got out together, there was no question of her waiting for me to open the door for her. As we were going up the steps I was smiling. 'Why are you smiling?' 'At you' I said, as the door was opened for us.

She ordered the butler to serve food quickly. Just as she had finished, the dining room door opened and he bowed to announce that dinner was served, we got up. She led the way. There were only the two of us. She sat at the end of the table and I on her right. After the footmen had helped us with our chairs forward and disappeared and before more came in to serve the food: I thought I would make my reply thrust. 'Your Highness you certainly need very special handling...' I hadn't finished when she said softly and mildly, 'Careful we have company...' She smiled while the butler asked me what I would have for a drink. He had a bottle of champagne in his hand while his No. 2 held the ice bucket. I indicated that I did not need any 'drink' to 'intoxicate' me. 'Have something, non-alcoholic?' she suggested. I settled for Avian — recently received from Paris. Dinners eventually come to an end — This dinner came to an end — too, even though it was just of — two. A company of careful conversation, not that anyone would have understood what we were saying. But conversation can be identified by gestures and the manner of presenting words and facial expressions. My friend carried a halo of awe with her and the attendants were anxious, in case they missed the sound of a bell. I came down to the car to open the door but there were already two attendants on either side, in their white uniforms with long frock coats with buttoned collars, wearing their sky blue turbans and gold and sky blue belts at the waist. But I stepped forward and opened the door for her and the doorman stepped aside. She waved as she drove away having said Khuda Hafiz (in God's care) and Shab-ba-Kher (Good night) to me before she got in pressing my left hand. Such a touch conveyed many messages, depending on the mood of the person deciphering them, but without taking off into ecstasies of imagination. To me it conveyed the one I cherished most, of close and warm friendship — demonstrated openly by the closeness and warmth, of both hands.

And yet when I lay on my bed I found it difficult to sleep, the mind asking questions about my friend — who she was and what she was and why she was. As I lay my mind drifted into the history of her ancestors — her great ancestor who founded the House and his wife — Dost Mohammad Khan and Fateh Bibi. I flew over the historical terrain of Bhopal. It was unique. She must be the chip of the same block.

A brief history of Bhopal is necessary for me because of my associations with the ruling family there. I was myself not related by 'law' or 'in-law' to them but I did get related with bonds stronger even than accidents of births or law, by a relationship called 'friendship'. But my brother was related, having eventually married the second daughter of the ruler, Princess Sajida Sultan — he became the son-in-law of the ruler.

At a time when the revival of orthodox Islam and the status and role of Muslim woman in modern society is capturing the attention of the world, the story of the Begums of Bhopal, and how during the last 200 years they overcame the prejudices, religious dogma and chauvinism of the period to play such a decisive and

positive role in an otherwise male-dominated society, provides thought-provoking reading for the historian and sociologist.

Bhopal State was situated in the Malwa region of central India, and seemed destined to be dominated by women from its very inception. It was founded in 1709 by an Afghan adventurer Dost Mohammad Khan, who first acquired the lease of a village called Bairasia which was to serve as a base. He then returned to his native Afghanistan to fetch his kinsmen and a trustworthy band of supporters to assist him.

His young wife, Fateh Bibi, was left behind in Bairasia at a period of particular turbulence and political unrest. The Mughal Princes were fighting amongst themselves, while their governors and lieutenants were busy converting their spheres of jurisdiction into personal kingdoms. The Marhattas, Rajputs and Pindharis were also taking full advantage of the situation and annexing territory after territory. Hordes of thugs and marauders ravaged and plundered the countryside without restraint or fear of retribution.

It was therefore a considerable achievement for Fateh Bibi to hold Bairasia against these various warring parties and finally hand it back to her husband intact after his return. Bairasia then became the centre from which Dost Mohammad Khan carried out the initial conquests that led to the founding of Bhopal State.

In recognition of her inspiring faith and assistance throughout his career, Dost Mohammad Khan named the fort he built 'Fateh Garh' after her. Both Dost Mohammad Khan and Fateh Bibi worked side by side with labourers throughout the construction of the fort. He also named the ensign of Bhopal 'Fateh Nishan' after her; an extraordinary tribute, coming as it did 300 years ago, from an Oriental male.

At that time, the Bara Tala'ab (big lake), near the site of the present-day city of Bhopal, was surrounded by thick bush and shrub, where Dost Mohammad Khan and Fateh Bibi frequently hunted. According to legend, the site of the city and fort was indicated to Dost Mohammad Khan by a saint in a dream. In due course, the modern city was built, with the Fateh Garh Fort standing majestically in the middle and the Fateh Nishan proudly fluttering on top of it; a worthy monument to the original builders of Bhopal. Dost Mohammad Khan and Fateh Bibi are buried side by side in the Fort. Their tombs survive, but the magnificent Fort itself has been recently demolished.

Dost Mohammad Khan died in 1740, having founded the dynasty which was to rule Bhopal for 240 years. He was succeeded by his son, Yar Mohammad Khan, whose wife, Mamola Bai, a Rajput lady renowned for her beauty and accomplishments, converted to Islam on her marriage, and from 1754 until her death in 1794 ruled Bhopal. Yar Mohammad had an eleven-year-old-son, Faiz, as his successor. Mamola Bai installed the child on the throne and made herself responsible for governing the state to prevent Faiz's relatives usurping his throne. The arrangement proved so successful that Faiz did not attempt to change it after he came of age; and retired into seclusion. He died childless in 1777 and immediately a controversy arose regarding the succession. Mamola Bai installed Faiz's younger brother Hayat, whereupon Bahoo Begum, Faiz's widow, staged a revolt and for nine years (1778-87) formed a parallel government of her own.

Obviously, both sides had supporters from among the family. Hayat proved incapable of controlling the situation so Mamola Bai again intervened. She banished Hayat's cousins who were supporting Bahoo Begum's unlawful government, and tactfully persuaded Bahoo Begum to acknowledge her brother-in-law, Hayat, as lawful successor and ruler. The exiled cousin, led by Shareef Mohammad Khan, attacked Bhopal (24 February 1787) and was defeated at the battle of

Phanda by the State army commanded by Mamola Bai. Their minor children grew up as orphans in exile and did not attempt to return to Bhopal, until after Mamola Bai's death in 1794. In time, Mamola Bai began to be called Maanji Sahiba (Madam Mother) and was revered for her piety, wisdom, and skill in consolidating and retaining the State during a particularly turbulent period.

Unfortunately, her son, Hayat, seems not to have inherited his mother's statesmanship, and paid a heavy price for disregarding her policies. He allowed Shareef's son, Wazeer, to return to Bhopal after her death, and as a result Wazeer's influence and popularity grew steadily. Ultimately their heroic defence of Fateh Garh in 1813-14 against the Marhatta Forces of Scindia and Ragojee Bhonsla converted Wazeer and his son Nazar into heroes who were acclaimed the Saviours of Bhopal. Therefore the State passed to the junior line. This was to happen twice again.

Years later in 1926 the Begum preferred to instal her younger son as the ruler after her and not the boys of her deceased elder two sons. So the State passed once again to the junior line. It was to happen again in 1960 when Nawab Hamidullah Khan died, his heir, his eldest daughter Abida who had immigrated to Pakistan was disinherited by the new Paramount Power in New Delhi and her younger sister was nominated to be ruler, to the title only because there was no state to rule. Soon the titles and privy purses went too.

In 1877, Nawab Ghaus Mohammad Khan, Hayat's successor married his daughter Qudsia to Nazar. The over-confident Nazar, posing as the Ruler himself, concluded a treaty of alliance with the British Governor-General, Lord Hastings, in 1818. The treaty was not popular, and as a result a mysterious bullet ended young Nazar's life, in 1819.

He left behind his eighteen-year-old widow, Qudsia, and his infant daughter, Sikander. In the lawless, male-dominated society of the time, the most likely outcome of Nazar's assassination would have been that the control of the State would have been taken over by Nawab Ghaus Mohammad Khan, Qudsia's father, or usurped by some uncle, brother or cousin. Qudsia, however, declared that since the British had already recognized Nazar as the Ruler, it was his infant daughter Sikander's right to succeed him and maintained that everyone who questioned this would have to contend with her. On Nazar's soyem (the ceremony held on the third day after death) she announced Sikander's accession to the dumbfounded members of the family, Jagirdars, nobles and officials who had congregated at her residence for the last rites. She also obtained their signatures to an oath of allegiance to herself and Sikander on a document which they all signed, fearful that their refusal would suggest their implication in Nazar's murder, and had it endorsed by the State Qazi and State Mufti. Among the signatories were her own brothers, the chief suspects. Thus, within three days of Nazar's death, his widow of eighteen had installed herself as Head of State, and all the combined protests, intrigues, threats, and attempts on her life failed to deflect her from her chosen path.

Qudsia, who had been deliberately kept illiterate and in strict purdah, now emerged without the veil, and took lessons in riding and the art of war, to demonstrate her fitness to govern in turbulent times. Mughal authority had ceased and the British were still establishing themselves as the dominant power. Bhopal was surrounded by the territories of mighty Marhatta princes, the Scindias, Holkars, Bhonslas and Gaekwars, two of whom had all but conquered the State five years before. Yet once more the honour of the Fateh Nishan was guarded by a mere woman.

For her Hindu subjects, Qudsia Begum became the reincarnation of Maanji Mamola Bai, for the Muslims it was Bhopal's 'destiny' to be ruled by women and for the historians it would prove to be the beginning of the 'Century of Women's Rule', for there was to be no male issue in the direct line of succession for four generations. During the eighteen years of her reign, Qudsia Begum defied and threatened, terrorized and cajoled, procrastinated and equivocated unity, jealous of her popularity and exasperated by her success, the male members of her family began to clamour for British intervention on the pretext that Islam was in danger since Islamic law did not acknowledge Women's Rule. The British, anxious to uphold the cause of religion — or for other reasons known to themselves gave their support to the men, and threatened to imprison both Qudsia and Sikander unless Sikander was married to her cousin Jahangir and power transferred to him forthwith. Too clever to defy the growing British power, Qudsia put aside valour and complied; only to prove her point later on.

Jahangeer proved a total failure as a ruler. During his short reign of seven years, the only noteworthy incident on record is his abortive attempt in May, 1838, to kill his pregnant wife with a sword while she was asleep. Sikanker escaped and installed herself in the Fort of Islamnagar, seven miles from Bhopal. Three months later she gave birth to a girl, Shahjahan, on 30 July 1838. As soon as she was able to resume her normal activities, which included riding, hunting and chaugan (a predecessor of polo), her favourite sport, she began terrorizing Jahangeer with gunfire and arrows, or by cavalry charges. On one such occasion Jahangeer was actually captured and imprisoned in the Fort of Ashta. He was released on the urgent embarrassment, added insult to injury by going to release him personally, and like a chivalrous warrior shook hands with her captive husband and Ruler. Death, howevr, intervened. Jahangeer died of his own excesses at the age of twenty-six on 9 December 1844. His six-year-old daughter Shahjahan, succeeded him, again with the provision that power would be transferred to her husbsnd when she married. Sikander and her uncle, Faujdar Mohammad Khan, were appointed co-Regents by the British. However, corruption and incompetence led to Faujdar's own removal within a short time, and Sikander alone held authority. Once again the government of Bhopal was in the hands of a woman, — man frequently conquers and squanders; woman tends to possess and preserve.

The glories of conquest are gained at the cost of human lives and massacres, generating hatred that lasts longer than the excitement and enthusiasm of victory. Peace, justice and fair administration have always endeared rulers to their subjects. Mamola Bai and Qudsia Begum brought out these contrasts by their genuine and sincere concern for the welfare of their people, making themselves accessible to them listening to their grievances and, in a country always troubled by religious conflict, being impartial towards Hindus, Muslims, Christians and other communities alike.

Qudsia Begum, though illiterate, insisted on having all reports and state papers read out to her daily, when she would make a 'ص' on the orders she dictated orally. The 'ص' (indicating 'agree' or short of correct) remained as effective as any elaborate signature or seal. Every afternoon she woud sit under a favourite tree outside her palace to meet her people and listen to their problems. No passes were required to approach her and no guards posted to protect her. She frequently went out in disguise to find out for herself how her orders were being executed by her officials and what her people thought of her government. She spun her own yarn and bought her personal requirements from the proceeds of its sale.

The cost of laying the Great India Peninsula (G.I.P) Railway Line in Bhopal was partly paid from her Privy Purse. The Bhopal Rubats, where thousands of pilgrims

have enjoyed free accommodation on pilgrimages for a century and a half in both Mecca and Medina were constructed by Qudsia Begum.

During her reign, Sikander Begum followed the example set by her mother with the added advantage of having been educated and groomed for her high position from birth. Sikander Begum was a strict disciplinarian, a stern administrator and a determined organizer, who went into the minutest detail to achieve the highest standard of efficiency and justice. An astute diplomat, she was able to steer clear of involvement in the Mutiny of 1857 without compromising her Treaty obligations as a British ally.

Nevertheless, despite all the power, authority and prestige that Sikander had gained during her Regency, her mother, Qudsia Begum was not satisfied. The British unjustly deprived her daughter of her birthright. The British had been guilty of breach of contract and faith, by involving the Treaty of 1818, by insisting even now on power being transferred to Shahjahan's husband. The British did see her point, but kept to their policy of non-interference in religious matters. Qudsia Begum, however, did not agree. She too based most of her political arguments in favour of Sikander's rule on Islamic doctrine, insisting that none of the impediments quoted against Women's rule could be traced to the Quran. The Quran and the Prophet had not prescribed any particular system of Government. How then could women have been excluded? The Quran, in referring to the Queen of Sheba, did not condemn her for being a queen, nor prohibit women from following her example in future. She argued too that the Companions of the Prophet woud never have followed Hazrat Ayesha, the Prophet's favourite wife, when she personally led her troops in the Battle of the Camel (c.AD 656), had there been the slightest doubt about the lawfulness of women's leadership. She argued that the Islamic laws of inheritance were intended for individuals, not for institutions, governments or matters of state, which were subject to the welfare of the people and the requirements of the times. Men who wielded power inflicted double standards for the sexes, arrogating sacrosanct privileges for themselves and denying opportunities for women in the name of Islam. Otherwise for example, the Mughal Empire should have been divided amongst the offspring of the Emperor according to the Islamic laws of inheritance, rather than left to the victors in the succession struggle.

With reference to the specific situation in Bhopal, she reasoned that the state judge and lawyers who had endorsed Sikander's succession were as competent — if not more so — to give decisions on matters of Islamic law as those who were on to issue legal decisions against her. The role of the women of Bhopal had amply proved that the prejudices against women unfounded, and, that given the training and opportunity, they were able to stand comparison with men. Finally, of course, there was the example of Queen Victoria. Was she not a woman ruling over millions of Muslims?

At last after an eighteen years long struggle, the condition that power would have to be transferred to the husbands of the Rulers was withdrawn by the British in 1855. There was, however, no law or precedent by which the minor Ruler, Sikander's daughter Shahjahan, could be displaced and Sikander installed as Ruler. Nevertheless when Shahjahan came of age she rose to the occasion and abdicated in favour of her mother in 1860. Sikander died on 30 October 1868, having ruled for sixteen years as Regent, and eight in her own right. She was survived by her only child, her daughter Shahjahan and her mother Qudsia Begum.

There was marked contrast between the reigns of the Begum Sikander and Shahjahan. While Sikander had a dominating almost masculine personality, Shahjahan was delicate and feminine. Sikander adminsitered with an iron hand and led her armies personally into battle, but Shahjahan preferred music, poetry, art, and

architecture, and built a magnificent palace, mosques and other buildings. Sikander consolidated her domain by quelling dissent and subjugating opposition; her daughter enjoyed the fruits of her mother's dynamic reign in an atmosphere of security and continuity. With Shahjahan, Bhopal's royal court saw, for the first and only time, the atmosphere of austerity and simplicity replaced by the pomp and splendour normally associated with princely courts. Some saw signs of degeneration in Shahjahan's reign, others a period when a breath of joy and gaiety was let into the life of Bhopal.

Unfortunately, however, she exposed herself to bitter criticism by marrying for the second time in 1871, and choosing for her husband her personal secretary, Sayyed Siddique Hassan, a man much below her station. This drove a wedge between her and her grandmother, Qudsia, and caused a prolonged estrangement from her only child, Sultan Jahan. Sultan Jahan Begum's reign commenced with a challenge. The Treasury had been denuded before she had assumed power, and all the wealth accumulated by the self-denials and sacrifices of Qudsia and Sikander had been squandered on the later of magnificent indiscretion by Shahjahan and Sayyed Siddique. The independence of the Ruler had been forfeited to the British Government, while the prestige and dignity of the women of Bhopal needed immediate rehabilitation. She was determined to dedicate her life to the reconstruction of the confidence built by her illustrious ancestor.

Though Qudsia Begum had given up purdah and Sikander Begum had never been obliged to observe it, Sultan Jahan chose to retain the traditional garb of the strict Muslim woman and travelled everywhere in a burqa.

Women's education and emancipation received her greatest attention. 'The Century of Women's Rule', begun by the great Qudsia in 1819, came to a close and passed into the hands of a male after four generations. It is nevertheless fair to say that Qudsia's great-great-granddaughter, Sultan Jahan, still reigns over the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing her.

She was an exceptional person, a most colourful and outstanding ruler.

She gave birth to her youngest son, the one I knew as the His Highness after a gap of 17 years between him and his elder brother. Her elder two sons and daughter died in her lifetime leaving two sons each. In 1923 she approached the British Government in Delhi, the Paramount Power whom she wished to declare as her heir her youngest son Hamidullah Khan (Hameed to her), my friend. This was not quite in order as both the elder brothers had left behind two sons each who had more right to succeed than His Highness who did, eventually. This fight for his succession is an interesting story and brings out her character and personality in clear perspective. She went and saw the Viceroy and explained to him her point of view. He and all others were courteous to her but in the end had to regret that what she was asking was unjust to the deceased elder sons and their heirs and would set a new precedent which could mean complications in other princely states; and in all there were nearly 600 of them. No such legalities could dampen her desire and she embarked on a P & O. Boat with her son and all his family, and the two sons of her second son whom she had won over. This was now 1925.

Here I would like to bring another colourful personality on the scene, no other than my maternal grand-father, the ruler of Loharu. A small state compared to Bhopal but a big man with a charming personality at the head of it. His state was too small for him and soon he got tired of it and handed it over to his eldest son and took on the role of a roving ambassador — advising among his fraternity whoever was in need of it. If the Begum of Bhopal was unique in her position, the only women ruler, this colourful prince was also unique in his own way. He was a handsome, scholarly person who could rattle off in Arabic, Persian and English as

freely as his native tongue Urdu. His diary started when he was a young prince and still an heir-apparent, and was written regularly without a day missing, in Persian, till a few hours before he left this world. He was 'advisor' to the British in Arab affairs, in the World War I — for which he got his Knighthood and personal salute of 9 guns. And was one of the three whose name was considered for Kingship of Iraq when the British thought that the Arabian peninsula looked too big for one Arab and a non-Arab in a corner, close to India, as a ruler would provide a foot in the door, in the affairs of that vast waste of land which nature had provided as a camouflage for the wealth that lay in the belly of that inhospitable vast arid area in the form of a mineral; that black liquid that beats the power of the good old gold. But my Nana was a shrewd person and I remember his telling me, when I was able to ask him such questions and he considered me intelligent enough to receive his attention and a reply, why he declined. He smiled, and said, 'Son I thanked them and told them that God was kind to me and I lived a happy and comfortable life and had no desire to have it ended by an Arab dagger in my back'. 'They understood', he said leaning his head back in the arm chair. He was a great chap for girls and I had the honour of taking mangoes to the fair sex in the dining hall of Cecil Hotel in Simla, on his behalf, to the tables which they occupied, with a card from him. Instantly he used to get a wave and smile to which he gave his gracious nod. I remember they used to ask me — 'And what is he to you?' — And my reply with a flair of pride — 'He is my grandfather'. Soon they would come and join us at the dinner table and have coffee with us. He would tell them jokes — Persian couplets, to suit the occasion with suitable translations. And I sat watching all this, alas; too young to take advantage of these super chess moves of my mother's father who could bring these 'queens' to a stalemate by checks from all directions, before they knew what had happened.

With such charmed arrows in his quiver he was in great demand by all the Princes who had delicate affairs to iron out with the Paramount Power in Simla, in summer and in New Delhi in winter. This kind of work was very much in his line. And he was the favourite of the Political Department — the Foreign Office of India and all the Viceroys enjoyed meeting him and listening to his parables in which he delicately slipped in the purpose of his visit. He usually got his way. In short he was a very distinguished and charming prince — negotiator. He was therefore asked by the 'other party' in the Bhopal succession case to 'help' them, in a just cause. He was 'engaged' for the task by Prince Habeebullah Khan, the eldest son of the deceased Heir-Apparent, Prince Nasrullah Khan. So 1925 also found Nawab Sir Amiruddin Ahmad Khan of Loharu in England. He was there till October, 1926 — leaving for home a few days before the Begum of Bhopal, putting across the other 'legitimate' point of view. But in Nawab Sultan Jahan, Begum of Bhopal, he found an opponent superior to him.

On ascending the throne in 1901 she attended Curzon's great Durbar at Delhi in 1903, held in honour of Edward VIIth becoming the King of England and Emperor of India. There is a mini-personal touch to this Durbar because His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught was present representing his elder brother and I had the honour of talking to him when he inspected the passing out parade at Sandhurst Royal Military College, when I passed out of it in 1932. I nearly 'passed-out' when he came up to me and spoke to me in Urdu which I couldn't understand but was gracious enough to smile and say, 'My Urdu has gone very rusty...' only then did it dawn on me that what he was saying was *'Apka Mezaj Kaesa Hai'* — a very polite way of saying, 'And how are you' — 'His Highness Bhopal was kind enough to call on me the other day', he had said.

According to all the accounts I have read of this Durbar, this great gentleman prince was never allowed to forget that the Viceroy in India was Nathanial Curzon. But the prince was too big to be reminded of this and took everything in his princely style and apparently from all accounts enjoyed the Durbar enormously. If he had not been Queen Victoria's son he would certainly have become the Commander-in-Chief of India because he proved his Soldierly qualities when he was G.O.C. (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief) Northern Command in Rawalpindi.

I have been carried away by His Royal Highness, and must return to the Royal pavilion of that Durbar Amphitheater where the Viceroy and H.R.H. The Duke were receiving greetings from the Princes. It is there that she — Her Highness Bhopal — made her real mark with Curzon. She went for her bow accompanied by her eldest son carrying a golden casket with a kharita in it. Both the Duke and Curzon shook her hand and as the Viceroy was doing that, he asked her what was in that casket. She replied, 'Greetings of loyalty from me and all the Muslims of India to his Majesty the King Emperor...' All said while he still held her hand. She moved away with a bow leaving the casket near the stool of the chair of the Viceroy — making a gesture that made all on the dais, rise and bow to her, breaking the protocol with pleasure.

Now how could my poor grandfather compete with a person like her. But he did and put up a good fight.

She further had the jewels of Bhopal to support her if need be, which incidentally she carried to London with her when she went to see the King and Emperor. She was aware of the ability of my grandfather. She was aware of the fact that he had made his rounds before her in Viceregal House and had now sailed ahead of her, heading for India House of Clive's fame in Whitehall, London.

The story would become too long if I went into any detail about the famous trip-one could write a book on it alone and amuse the reader and so I would stick thinly to the fundamentals and where Princess Abida was an eye witness. It is hilarious to hear from her how the treasure that was being carried in heavy boxes was guarded by the trusted in a cabin next to her's. She was twelve then and considered old enough to keep an eye on the people entrusted with the task of guarding. The Princess took over the guard herself when the person on guard had to be relieved because of his personal reasons and natural requirements over which he had no control. As her cabin was next to the treasures she was the one who took the brunt. And next to hers was Her Highness herself. As the future ruler to be, Abida was kept under a very strict eye and even a cane stick, at the tender age of 7-10 'When a woman can marry at the age of twelve and even earlier, because of the climate and heat of the East responsible for such early maturity, one cannot take chances'. Her Highness used to say!

The party arrived in London without incident enroute and were installed in 29 Portman Square of innumerable rooms. It was not before the matter for which she had taken this journey was taken up with the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead. He being a lawyer of eminence played for time with delicate parries every time a thrust was made.

While this was going on my grandfather had not wasted his time. He had sat for a portrait with a leading painter and so his pictures were out in the local papers with his handsome face at its best in the climate and among 'good looking people' as he termed them. He parted his beard in the centre and then brushed it up on both sides, something that had not been seen in London or at Ascot — where he attended regularly, though he had never shown any love for horses before, as he always declared his country was suitable for the camel, with padded hovers. But it

had to be done because the people he was dealing with loves horses and, what is more, racing.

This was disturbing to Her Highness because she could hardly attend races at Ascot with grace, shrouded in her burqa, and could easily be taken for a Gypsy or something moving about in her mobile tent. Her son for whom she was fighting was a lover of horses and a renowned polo player but his publicity was not the same thing; she was the negotiator. She racked her brains and eventually decided on Turkish Baths to keep her fit for the battle to come and to see how this bathing in special public baths could be used for PR. It worked. When it was announced that she had reserved a whole bath for herself and would be arriving with her own bathers with her own soaps it caught the imagination of Fleet Street who were already longing to see what was behind that Muslim veil that obstructed the view of the face.

She arrived at the Baths in her long Rolls attended by Master Sahib — Wali Mohammad [He had been the Ustad (teacher), of His Highness Hamidullah Khan], so must have been, a trusted man to have the favourite son's education placed in his hands, and her favourite maids who bathed her. Every one was kept off so the only picture that could be taken was of Her Highness alighting from the Rolls followed by her ladies. The baths had never bathed a lady of this nature before, a ruling princess of a state in the most precious jewel in the crown of England, India. She entered the doors which closed behind her — guarded by the attendant with Master Sahib as the guard commander. Within minutes a shriek was heard from inside and everybody outside was alerted but no one dare to open the door. The door soon opened and a cloud of steam rushed out and the maids rushed to Master Sahib shrieking and shouting — 'Her Highness has fainted when the steam was let into the steam room before the bathrooms'. The entire management was crowding round the doors, which did not help matters but soon it was realized what had happened and the steam was cut off. Fresh air was let into the room. But this fresh air was of London not of Bhopal, it was cold but it did the trick; opening her eyes she asked for a blanket and complained in her chaste but rather sharp and abusive Urdu that this country was either smoky or too cold. There were no blankets at hand but long bath towels did the trick, in that rather ill-lit room she couldn't tell the difference.

The proprietor of the baths was an astute man, he gauged the situation correct and started giving instruction on how to get to the next bathroom — the bathing room — and explained the various taps at the top of his voice to Master Sahib who was standing close to him and by now was translating all he was saying to the maids. Soon Her Highness's voice was heard 'who is this man? Why is he shouting so much? Master Sahib, throw him out'. Poor Master Sahib could hardly do that to the owner of the baths but with great humility replied, 'Immediately Your Highness...' and took the man away while the maids of Bhopal having scouted around the bathing room had led the Begum into it.

The protocol of the baths itself the dropping off of the robe and scrubbing at the back and body by the maids with special Multani mitti (soap made of Multani curd considered good for scrubbing dirt off the body) of her Highness is too personal to be related here. But this much can be exposed in the dim light of the bath, that when one of the younger maids had put her foot on the cake of soap and went skating into the wall missing Her Highness by inches. Her Highness inquired if she was hurt, but finished the sentence with this murmur, "The bitch could have killed me in this dozakh (hell) here", and then came another shout from Her Highness. 'Torch — Torch — Torch'. Now this was not catered for in these baths and so the proprietor put up his hands and said we have no torch. So

the Master Sahib was heard saying 'Well get a dozen — quickly'. Said the Master Sahib with a vacant look, thinking to himself, who was mad? — this whole party, or him, for having let himself into all this.

Before the Torch came Her Highness had had enough and was taken to the dressing room where she was dressed. Before she came out Master Sahib was clearing the doorway for Her Highness to come through the doors to the street where the car was waiting, by now surrounded by half a dozen Bobbies in their famous blue uniform and high blue helmets trying to keep back the crowd and the reporters. Her Highness appeared at last in the door in her burqa as ever, and the reporters shouting — to find out some things — 'What happened? What happened? Did you have a bath?' Before Master Sahib could formulate an answer or a reply the proprietor tried to be helpful and blurted out 'Nothng, nothing, Her Highness just fainted...' This was enough for them to build their story on. When the car moved she asked Master Sahib: 'What was that stupid man shouting?' meaning the proprietor. Master Sahib being the master of discretion and diplomacy pretended that he had not heard, in all that rush and shouting *'Hazoor ye log bare bad tamiz hain,'* (Your Highness these people are very ill-mannered).

But by the late lunch the cat was out of the bag and the afternoon papers had her picture coming out of the baths with the story and headlines read 'The Begum Faints.' Her Highness relaxed after her bath and was quite satisfied in the end 'at least this damned experience will bring some PR advantage'. Abida had been the first to greet her and being inquisitive had asked, 'What happened?'

London weather was always uncertain and so the clouds gathered in no time, thunder and lightning was not far behind and neither were the afternoon papers with the headline and the picture of Her Highness. Master Sahib got wind of it from the head-porter, rushed down and ordered that not a single copy was to be seen by anyone in the house. All the copies were bought straight away, if anyone had bought a copy, it was to be recovered at any cost. So the head-porter had his hands full but must have finished off by having his pockets full too. So far so good.

The process of negotiation was going on but she was not happy with the pace. She had seen Birkenhead who was cautious of course but evasive and too noncommittal like all 'Silks' when handling a case. She had a private lunch with the King and the Queen but naturally did not talk shop. She felt that the pace had to be quickened. This Bath incident had been a blessing in disguise in a way and a drama could be worked out on reasons of health, the matter should be decided early, it had dragged on enough. Her fertile mind was at work. She came to the conclusion — she was going to ask for an audience with the King. She felt lighter in the shoulders and behind the neck after taking this decision mentally. The request would go tomorrow.

She was preparing for bed when there was a knock on the door and Master Sahib appeared with a paper in his hand. This must be the reply, she thought. Master Sahib spoke, 'He sent the flowers too with a fine message.'

'Who?'

'The Nawab Sahib' before he could go any further she understood. 'The Hypocrite. He must be told that it will be a long time Insha-Allah (God willing) before I got into my eternal faint. I will win, God willing and not before long either'. 'If Hameed doesn't get it no one will'. This was said more to herself than to anyone else.

Master Sahib took his leave having done his duty as commanded, giving the news before the day ended.

The rest of 29 Portman Square were busy in the activities that youngsters are usually busy with during the night, in London, allowing for the watchful eye kept

on them. They couldn't care when the matter was solved, in fact the longer it took the better. Most of them were having a good time — discreetly.

Buckingham Palace received the request. It was granted, the King and the Queen had a special soft corner for her. They had not forgotten the Durbar in Delhi and the gesture of a message from all the Muslims of India in a golden casket. Instructions were given for the latest briefing on the subject.

The day arrived.

Her Highness was always up early for her morning prayers. But this time a bit earlier, for special prayers. It was the most important day of her life. She was going to get a decision today Insha-Allah. She had resolved, even if it meant a faint. This faint affair had been ordained, she had worked herself up to believing it.

The omens were right, it was a fine day. The journey had been timed and she left punctually, to reach there at 1100 hrs. on the stroke of Big Ben. She was attended by her courtiers, according to protocol but only those who could fit in the Rolls. Master Sahib was in front with the chauffeur. The car slid through Pall Mall with the Begum of Bhopal in her burqa on her mission of life and death. The ritual of receiving her at the entrance was carried out and she glided through the long corridor with the royal red carpet from wall to wall and the late monarchs in their flashy uniforms and orders watching her from portraits on the walls. Cornwallis' famous long painting of himself, his retinue on the march in India covering the side gallery panel all the way, had been passed on the left and she approached the study's huge gilt and white door. It was opened and inside His Majesty could be seen standing, smiling with his right hand stretched. She stopped short, made her bow (she was master at all this) and stretched her right hand. The Monarch sat her on his right on a sofa in the huge study facing the monument of Queen Victoria in front of the main gates of the Palace.

The Monarch spoke first, 'And how is Your Highness after that unfortunate Bath Incident?' She knew he would do that. He was a great gentleman. And a kind man. The faint business she thought to herself has been a blessing in disguise. She replied after a dignified pause 'Your Majesty is very kind. It was nothing. I am not used to so much steam. I get these spells now and again and the doctors have told me to be careful but the time is fixed for all of us.' She paused waiting for a reaction from the other side.

The Monarch was kind and considerate 'O Your Highness, you will enjoy a long life, your children and your subjects need your benevolent guidanace.' She was waiting for this reply and the moment he mentioned the word 'children' she knew what to do and what to say.

"Your Majesty is indeed kind. All my children except one have gone (Pause — she had to play this part very carefully she knew), to where they came from. My only child left — my youngest son, whom I have brought up with such care, and who is excellent in studies and sports and has the makings of a ruler of stature, a male after such a long line of female rulers of Bhopal, is not accepted by your people in India". She paused. One doesn't give sermons to monarchs she knew. She was one herself. But His Majesty was in no hurry and wanted her to have her say. He had gone through his brief carefully. She had waited enough so spoke again.

'Is it asking too much to ask that my only direct heir, my son, be accepted as my heir?' This was a direct question and the Monarch had to reply.

'Your Highness the matter has been gone into very thoroughly, I am told, and there is a fear that a precedent of this kind could cause problems with others'. The Monarch paused. She must do something before the conversation came to a dead end. She acted. She had not become the Begum, the only female ruler in India, for

nothing. She went into action. The Burqa came off and now His Majesty was face to face with Sultan Jahan Begum ruler of Bhopal.

'What kind of King and Emperor are you that you cannot order a woman's son to be accepted as her heir, when her other sons have died in her lifetime. In my small kingdom I can do anything. And you have an empire over which the sun never sets'. She paused and went for her handkerchief. She was going into a faint. His Majesty was soon to feel the impact of it.

'Your Highness I am a constitutional Monarch'. She was not listening to what he was saying. She had heard all that before, she fainted and dropped by his feet, having slowly slid from the sofa.

The Monarch had never had this experience before. He got up quickly, rang the bell and asked for the Queen and smelling salts. The Queen and her Ladies in waiting helped the Begum with smelling salts while the King paced the study assessing the situation. Her Highness came to. Burqa was retrieved, she was helped to the sofa again, she put her head down, to get some more blood in it. She apologized for the scene. By this time the royal physician in attendance had arrived and so had the tea. Her Highness was now composed and was, under her breath, reciting the words of Quran suitable for such conditions of extreme emergency — an important prayer for victory. The faint and the prayers worked and while the Queen was giving the Begum a cup of tea His Majesty had made up his mind and spoke —

'Your Highness you must not let yourself be upset like this. There is nothing in the world that has no solution. Rules are made by man, they are not Commandments from heaven...' That was enough. She had won her Waterloo. She sat up in the sofa and spoke —

'I am forever grateful to you, O noble King, for listening to the appeal of a widow and mother of her only son, so kindly and benevolently.' She half got up in the sofa and made her bow.

That is how Hamidullah Khan of Bhopal became the heir to Bhopal and later on by her abdiction in his favour became the ruler of Bhopal in her lifetime.

The dialogue is more or less authentic. I have heard it many times from Beva, Her Highness Bhopal, Princess Abida's mother, to whom it was related by the Begum word for word, with glee. Beva recorded it because it was so historical and Abida had heard it too because she was always near her grandmother and did not hesitate to eavesdrop or keyhole peep, being very inquisitive by nature and so missed nothing; this I was to learn early in our friendship which had passed the half century score on the board.

What happened to my grandfather, some might like to know. He was, as usual, up with the news and left for a tour of Europe on his way back home. He did his best, but you can't beat the will of God and also of a stubborn, powerful woman. he had earned his 'fees' — his conscience was clear; soon he hoped another assignment would come his way. Six hundred odd Princes had six thousand odd problems and he was the acclaimed master problem solver. He was one of those very fortunate persons to whom even money came running, since troubles to so many brother princes came running. In one of his reflective moods while puffing at his silver huqqa I have heard him exclaim, 'money is like a woman, chase her and she will run from you, be indifferent to her outwardly, she will become inquisitive and come to you.' Having passed this judgement he would reflect, which would bring a smile to his face, he would half close his hawk like eyes and would mutter to himself, 'But of course it depends on the woman, everyone is of its own kind. God has no mass production in his factories.'

My grandfather had a number of wives. My poor grandmother bless her soul, was the first one and bore him nine children. He had as many, or near enough as many, from other wives after her. His last child was born when he was seventy-seven according to Islamic calendar calculations. All his children did well in life but the only one, in my opinion, who was of his calibre in statecraft, statesmanship and intellect was my mother, who became a widow at the age of twenty-four and was Regent for thiteen years. Her benevolent rule and her judgements are cited as classics today — but today there are no princes and no judgements to give. 'Today they practise law and justice is not dispensed,' is what I heard her saying once, a year or so before she died in 1969 — on the 18th of January to be precise.

They don't make them anymore like Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal, Abida's grandmother, and Shahar Bano Begum of Pataudi, my mother. They were custom built.

I go back to my grandfather again, he returned in 1926 late in September, and lost his eldest son in October, whom he had installed as the ruler. This was a great loss for him as he was an able person and had made a name for himself in his own right. He was succeeded by his eldest son — installed again by his grandfather, who still preferred to be free of shackles of rulership, specially of a state too small for his horizons.

To finish this episode — this grandson was a friend of mine and was an Honorary Officer in my regiment — 7th Light Cavalry. He was very fond of flying. I went up with him once at his place, in a two-seater single engine aircraft. I have to admit that I was very happy to be back on the ground, on my two feet. He was a charming man. After partition — of the sub-continent — he held high posts with the Indian Government, having become the Governor of Himachel Pardesh and later of East Punjab. He died only three years ago.

My grandfather was a perfect gentleman prince. A decision had been taken and Hamidullah Khan appointed the Heir, he was one of the first to congratulate him and Her Highness. This shows that he was a good sport and took his defeat in the right spirit.

Soon after her return in late 1926, Her Highness abdicated in favour of her son and installed him as the Ruler. She remained the Sarkar (Actually meaning Ruler or Government but here it would mean the Head or the King or Queen or Ruler). This is how H.H. Hamidullah, my friend, came to be the ruler of Bhopal.

Through him I got to know the eldest daughter, his heiress. She lived in a mini palace beautifully situated at the edge of the back of the ridge on which Ahmadabad Palace had been built. It had a view from which the lake could be seen in the distance and the undulating area to the west towards the airport and Baragarh, where the big prisoner of war camp was located, where all the Italian and other European prisoners of war were kept, 'caged' would be too derogatory a term particularly when one of them was a well known painter of Rome (Roma as he wrote on his canvas) who was commissioned by His Highness to paint my life size portraits in my 28 Madras Light Cavalry full dress which he likes so much.

Abida I found was exactly two and a half months younger than me. I am afraid the reader will have to guess the ages today because it is bad manners to give away the age of a lady. I have already given mine earlier in the book, so hers can be worked out. She is still as young at heart as ever and never allows any one to even guess how much she missed her 'Nur-us-Sabah' and all that went with it. I have often heard her change the subject when some old Bhopali starts reminiscing, 'Hazoor (my lady) those were wonderful days' and from Hazoor, with a smile, comes a polite 'don't spoil them please by comparing them to the present ones'.

I seldom go to Karachi. It has become a different world, like all places do if for some reason travel becomes difficult and trips far between. But when I do go a visit to her is a must. It is always a surprise. Because our telephones like so many other things these days tend to be temperamental. You can hear the bell ring at the other end but that doesn't mean that the phone is ringing. So I have always caught her by surprise as I used to in Bhopal when I turned up at odd times without announcement. She is never surprised and in her grace always says 'I had a feeling you were coming'. Can a lady be more graceful and complimentary? It is this open charm and her captivating half smile, that has attracted me to her from our first meeting. The first meeting was at Delhi railway station in late 1932, when she, accompanied by her two younger sisters and mother, were on their way to Bhopal. I had accompanied my brother to the railway station, who needed his hand to be held as he was seeing his love in the same compartment — the number two sister. The train was a bit delayed and my brother was pacing up and down the busy platform, smoking a cigarette a minute. Both of us, brothers, were highly strung and sensitive people but we had entirely different approaches. He carried his storms within him. I blew them out as quickly as they were formed. He needed the ordeal of pulling a cigarette out of his case then the lighter, or even more cumbersome at times carrying matches then to light the right end of the wretched cigarette, after tapping it on something, anything handy, than to dispose of the match or put away the case and the lighter. Then came the exhaling of the smoke from the mouth or the nose, depending on the habit. This paraphernalia was too much for me. I have always valued time and have inbred habits of frugality — by watching my mother from an early age conserving pieces of paper left over from writing — for future note writing. A habit of mine which I find my children watch with interest, but unfortunately make no attempt to develop such a habit of 'waste not want not'. They are impressed when I tell them how much I have saved from such habits, and have therefore made money, by good investment, of which they are the main beneficiaries. Money has become the essential curse of the world we live in today. But I have not allowed it to become my God, which most seem to have done.

To get back to Delhi railway station and the Bhopl saloon coming to a halt at last, the door opening and my brother throwing away his cigarette as he entered the carriage. I followed and met the family, mother (Her Highness) and the three daughters. The mother looked a Queen that she was as I grew to know her later, and a gracious mother. I couldn't help seeing the marked difference between the three sisters from the very first glance. The fairest was No. 2 who became my sister-in-law eventually. Seven years were to pass from this meeting till she got married on 9 April 1939. The most vivacious in looks and approach was No. 1. She talked through her eyes and half smiles. She had very short hair like a boy and her entire approach was an interesting girl-boy mixture. I remember so well to this day her looking at me with curiosity, and her gaze going up and down as if on parade inspecting a guard of honour. The youngest was a peculiar mixture too. More girlish but again a bit of a tom-boy. Her gaze was more of boredom than of interest or anything else except of confusion about her own position in this gathering. I remember her remark to her mother, after examining me for a second, 'Who is he...?' To which Her Highness had replied with a tone of embarrassment and sharpness. 'Pat's brother of course'. Her Highness was then heard asking one of the attendants for 'General Sahib'. (Major General Toogood, who had been Military Secretarty to the Viceroy and now had the same appointment with His Highness Bhopal, and on that occasion was in attendance to this Royal party). I remember pricking my ears when General Sahib was mentioned. And soon found out that the task that had been assigned to him at the time was not to let the train

move till the *tokra* (large cane basket) of the betel leaf had arrived. The General fulfilled the task and the train was delayed till the large basket had arrived. My introduction to him was rather hurried and embarrassing as a 2nd Lieutenant was witnessing a British Major-General running around to find out when this wretched basket of betel leaves would arrive from the market close by, before the main mail passenger train from Delhi to Bombay — passing through Bhopal — could move.

While all this was happening my brother and his lady were busy trying to say whatever they could to each other by mouth or through eyes. It was mostly through the latter. Her Highness was conversing with me and I don't remember saying a single word to any of the sisters. The youngest was bored and sulking for some reason or the other. The eldest was amused with what was going on and particularly trying to read my mind, and what I thought of it all.

Soon the general arrived and the train was on its way again and so we took our leave. I bowed and salaamed to Her Highness and she embraced me and gave me a motherly kiss. My sister-in-law to be, it was hoped then, gave me a very friendly smile, with a 'nice to have met you', and the eldest smiled and through her eyes said the same thing, she was obviously taking no chances with this stranger who was the brother of her brother-in-law to be. The youngest was leaning out of the window and was not in the least interested in what was taking place in the compartment but was kind enough to say 'good-bye' as we stepped on to the platform.

After we had done the waving and my brother had lit his cigarette he asked me, "What did you think of her?" I remember saying, 'your friend was the only effeminate one of the three and pleased to at least say something to a stranger'. Her's was a man of few words and at this particular point was in the train more than with me.

To return to the Bhopal family again where I was explaining the beginning of my relationship with Abida I don't remember talking to her on that first meeting but she did speak through the eyes and smiles. This, I was to find out as our friendship grew, was her main channel of communication. She hardly ever got into animated conversation. She was a listener more than a talker. This may have been with me but then I can only relate what she was to me.

Attraction to one another had been based on something which I cannot describe in one word — but which makes me write books and poetry. She said the other day, "I was not made to be a woman..." But she was made a woman. I was attracted to her because she was an extraordinary woman, and very much a woman. I have known many beautiful women, they are today still my friends though changed in looks. It is not so much their looks that attract men but what they are as a whole, an attractive woman is not necessarily a pretty woman.

Writing about Bhopal and Abida I have often wondered what would have happened if she had not been named 'Abida'. Her grandmother when she named her so put a shackle on her, being what she was. And she never really succeeded in getting rid of it, not even after her death. (Abid — devoter) from which Abida is derived means, worshipper of God or devotee.

One thing, I think, Abida and I have shared all our life — is being alone — most of the time, even when in company. I wonder if people will understand fully what I mean — this 'quality', if I may describe is as such, was in our 'make-up'; in our mould.

To get back to 30's — and to Abida — she was engaged at the age of six, the Nikah took place in 1926, soon after her father was declared the heir, and was married in 1933, three years after the grandmother's death; who had abdicated in favour of her son the moment he was accepted the heir by the Paramount Power

Abida was declared the heir before her grandmother's demise in 1930 — 12th of May to be exact.

My relationship with H.H. Hamidullah Khan developed out of haphazard associations at polo meetings, at gatherings in Delhi, where he found me in the company of senior white officers of the Raj. It may have been curiosity on his part that attracted him to me — a very young looking Army Officer always in the right circles of the Raj, many a time in animated conversation with people twice his age. His Highness was not a great conversationalist in parties, basically he was a shy man. I remember he was in Delhi for polo once where we met at Kashmir House and when he was leaving and I had gone to see him to his car he asked me if I was doing anything at the time and when I had said, 'no' "why don't you jump in and we will go for a drive to see the horses".

This was the first drive which I had with him alone. He was driving himself, a lovely light-blue Rolls-Bentley. I remember this so well. It must have been brand new, because it still had that lovely distinctive smell of leather upholestery. I sat with him in front. He went past the George the V statue, and then under the railway bridge to old Delhi, through the Delhi gate, past the Red Fort and then under the railway bridge again, through Kashmir gate, past the Nicholson monument and then past the Cecil and Swiss hotels and Maidens Hotel on the Ridge. The famous Ridge from where British launched their offensive for retaking Delhi from the Mutineers in 1857. We climbed a bit and then halted for a minute or two to get our bearing. All this time there was hardly any conversation. He asked a question or two about the surroundings from his chauffeur, a Bhopali sitting at the back looking spick and span in his light blue turban, tied the Rajputana way like His Highness did himself on ceremonial occasions. I did the listening of their dialogue, between the Chancellor (elected Head of the Chamber of Princes) and Bhopali who was not sure of his bearings in the capital of India, old Delhi or New Delhi. This thought caused a bit of anxiety to me in case my knowledge was put to test too. And while he was questioning the man, I was looking around fast to answer the question if it was put to me.

It did not take long for the Master to say 'uloo' (owl—idiot) to this poor man who was more lost than his Master. Taking courage at the dilemma I politely suggested that we go to the highest point where we were bound to spot the monument marking the pavilion, the centre of the amphitheater, where the great 1911 Delhi Durbar was held by George V declaring — New Delhi the new Capital of India — good bye to Clive's Calcutta. The suggestion was well received by: 'that's a good idea'. And thank God we sighted the monument and my honour was saved — I had made my first impression on this quiet shy man who I hope had in a military fashion received me as 'an intelligent officer, who should go far...' From there he knew the way to the stables, which apparently he had been heading for. We passed the Durbar grounds and soon spotted the Stable Camp.

We got out and His Highness looked at his own string of ponies and asked about the other ponies that were to play the finals the next day. One of his favourite ponies had picked up a nail and was lame. We examined it and questions were asked from the Veterinary Officer in charge and the head-groom. I had just come from Poona, after completing a Veterinary Course and was bursting with confidence on this subject. So when His Highness looked at me, as if asking, 'What is your opinion', I picked up the horse's hoof (it was the near-fore and saw the bruise and small puncture caused by the nail and on pressing got a reaction of pain from the animal). I asked His Highness if he intended playing him. He said it was his second Chukkar horse. I advised the Bhopal Veterinary Officer that he should give it a hot bran poultice straight away to draw the pain out and then a

very strong dose of iodine next morning, and then put a leather based seated out shoes. And if the horse showed improvement to bring him to the ground and not to forget to bring the pain-killer injection, which I said I would give myself, on the ground. This performance of mine impressed the assembly and I felt that His Highness was pleased, but more than that, he showed signs of being proud of me as well.

This is when I think I made the mark on him about myself and after that he encouraged me to see more of him — by asking me to stay on to a meal and picking me up in the morning, from Kashmir House for a visit to the stables when he just rode or mildly schooled one to two of his ponies.

The need to play the horse never arose because when he asked me about it I had said that if he was pressed for a horse then the pain-killer can be given but if it can be spared then it sould not be played. I would advise that. My advice was taken and he played another pony of his — there was no shortage of them; thirty-two of them had come from Bhopal.

The reader I am sure will have realized by now that I am trying to indicate that it was the horse again that brought this prince and myself together — an association which developed into a 'father-son' relationship.

I got to know the family exceeding well, in fact in a way, I became very much a part of it from the 30's onwards. My relationship with His Highness and the family was independent of the fact that my brother was married to the second daughter of the ruler. His Highness and Her Highness were most kind and affectionate to me; and gave me a position so close to them that it started a whiff of envy. A relationship not given to one's own, leave alone an outsider. The Heir Apparent, the eldest daughter and I became close friends mainly through the common habits of sports and our approach to life which happened to be similar.

A friendship which I cherish as I write these lines developed between Abida (the eldest daughter) and myself, through my association with His Highness and his encouragement. In another state it may have been difficult to understand but not in Bhopal; here the woman was the dominant factor.

When I met her she was already married and had a son 3 or 4 years old. She had been brought up by her grandmother and her nikah and marriage contract had been finalized in her lifetime but the vidaegi (departure and consummation of marriage) did not take place till after her grandmother's death which took place in 1930. She had ceased living with her husband soon after the birth of her son. She lived in 'Nur-us-Sabah'. She had had a very strict up-bringing under the close supervision of her grandmother, who having handed over the rule of the state to her son now ruled over her eldest grand-daughter who was only born in 1913. Even her bed was close to the old Lady's and though she must have lamented her grandmother's demise in 1930 when she was 17 she became conscious of her freedom and was rather relieved when the strict scrutiny of all her actions disappeared. His Highness had no son so it seemed that the mantle of ruling was to fall on the shoulders of Abida and so from the day she could run about and create 'mischief' she was reminded of her responsibilities to come and therefore to 'behave' accordingly by her grandmother.

The achievement of the Begums of Bhopal, effective rulers of their Indian state from 1819 to 1837 and from 1844 to 1926, is unprecedented in Islamic history. There have been women who have wielded power from the harem, like Nur Jahan who ruled the Moghul empire through her husband Jahangir. There has been an odd accepted woman-ruler like Shajar-al Darr who ruled Egypt in 1249-50. But a dynasty of women, formally recognized by the high Muslim authorities, is unique.

The state ruled by the Begums after that of the Nizams of Hyderabad was the most important Muslim-ruled territory in British India. Their ancestors had, like those of many other Indian princes, carved it out of central India as Moghul power declined, and then preserved its integrity till forced to acknowledge British paramountcy in 1818. Bhopal's rulers, as potential leaders of Indo-Muslim opinion, were treated carefully by the British who made attempts to control the succession at first, hampering the authority of the Begum but later, after the agreement of 1855, helped to support it. In 1947 Bhopal joined the new Republic of India being incorporated into the state of Madhya Pardesh.

Abida was very proud of her heritage: her grandmother had rubbed this into her and the fact that one day she would be the Ruler. She had an easy example to follow, that of Sikander Jahan Begum. As the Frenchman Louis Rousselet, the great traveller, records his impression of Sikander Begum, when he was ushered into her Court: 'The Begum is a woman of about fifty years of age — thin skin, lighted up by a pair of intelligent eyes, expresses such a singular amount of energy that one must be aware of it beforehand in order to realize the fact.

'The costume itself aids the illusion, tight-fitting pantaloons, an embroidered jacket, and a sword at the belt, have, as a whole anything but a feminine appearance. Her gestures and manners still less remind one of her sex; on the contrary, they reveal the sovereign and the autocrat accustomed to find everything yielding to his all powerful will; but I must admit at once that this majestic haughtiness lasted for only a few moments, and soon gave way to gracious and winning affability'; this is a very good description of how I found Abida when I met her.

She, Sikander, is the one who was the daughter of the last Nawab and on attaining her majority, established her claim to the vacant throne, but the Paramount Power, gave preference to her husband, Jahangir Khan. At his death she imposed herself as Regent, in the name of Shahjahan, her daughter, who was still a minor. She rejected the rule of Purdah, which she called absurd. She presented herself to the people with uncovered face, dressed in the costume of princes and enjoyed herself seated on her horse.

So it was nothing new for the Paramount Power to intervene in the affairs of succession, Abida's father was in the end accepted as the heir by-passing his four nephews from two elder brothers. His mother abdicated in 1926 to put him on the Gaddi, when Abida as the eldest daughter became the heir. She for 21 years acted as number two to her father, in all affairs of the state. In 1947 at Partition she was so disgusted at the manner in which actual partition took place and particularly the way in which the Princes were treated by the departing Paramount Power, the British Viceroy, that she decided to leave for Pakistan. She saw no future for the Princes in their states and certainly for the Muslim rulers like Bhopal, Hyderabad and other small states like Pataudi etc. where the subjects were mainly Hindus.

Partition had taken place on the slogan of religion, any political discussion had to be on a religious basis, after the acceptance of a separate electorate for the Hindus and Muslims brought about by that genius of a man called Minto — The Viceroy in 1907 till 1912.

Abida went to Pakistan in 1950, saying good-bye to Bhopal forever. When His Highness died in 1960 the Paramount Power decided to appoint his younger daughter, my sister-in-law, the Begum of Pataudi, Princess Sajida Sultan, the successor to the title. But the Privy Purse was reduced by half. In 1972, the title went and the Privy Purses disappeared. So Abida's fears came true.

She lives in Malir a few miles from Karachi International Airport off the main road to Hyderabad, a stone's throw from Bahawalpur House, in a modest house built by her a couple of decades back, which is called Bhopal House by everyone.

Whenever in Karachi, I enjoy my surprise visits to her, I find her either pruning her roses or playing Table Tennis in the shed next to the house with youngsters from Malir. They all love her and respect her. On a number of times I have had to ring the bell on the gate several times before the old man who has been with her for many years turns up to open it. Inside I find this Princess all alone; except with one or two small girls. It is only after sometimes that a face peeps around the corner of an odd grown woman servant and couple of young boys who look after the house. Often I have thrown myself into one of her big cushion chairs, with my head back, closed my eyes, while she was rushing around in her kitchen-cum-pantry insisting I have some tea and wandered in my flight of thought to her mini-palace in Bhopal — Nur-us-Sabah. There she lived like a Queen on her own with her only child, an adorable boy now grown into a seasoned diplomat — our Ambassador at the Court of St. James' in London. It was interesting to see this lady bring up her only child so well. The clatter of the tea cups did not allow one to stay long in Nur-us-Sabah, her remark when she noticed me reminiscing was typical, 'Come on, stop living in the past, it's all over. We are lucky to have lived that life. We are lucky now to live with self-respect with our heads high, respected by people amongst whom we live.' "I agree" was all one could say. I agree there is so much to be thankful for but happy days are nice to play back sometimes even if they bring tears to your eyes. 'Life is an association of human beings as you say.' We are fortunate that we can meet like this. What is that couplet of your Ghazal? I love that Ghazal of yours.'

All other relationships are of accident
But the ones of friendship are of the heart

"How can you live in this wilderness, all by yourself, with just these people" — I have often asked. The reply has been the same." How did I live there all by myself? That was also a wilderness. You know, sometimes, you can be very lonely in a palace too. And in crowded halls...." "I know. I know." I had been through that myself many times.

"One comes alone. One goes alone. It is not so lonely to be alone. It is all a matter of getting used to it. Now I would go mad if I wasn't able to be alone". "I agree". I said...." "You have become a man of few words".

"Not realy. Ask those who need talking to. There is nothing left to say to you. You know what goes on in my mind and in my heart". You have achieved Nirvana.

"You are a poet all right. I didn't know that part of you till much later by creating another image of yourself. You may confuse others completely unless of course you give up your first one and create or expose the other one. It can be done. It has been done, but it takes time. Life is a race against time".

"You must make your poetry public. You owe it to the people". This provoked me.

"I owe nothig to anyone except my Allah. As I have told you no big decision of mine is without His approval. Many times it is taken for me and I just implement it. Do you know what I am talking about?"

"I am surprised you ask me this. Half a century of association should give one insight into a friend, the only male friend with whom I have associated with, in the manner that I have".

"I am sorry I didn't mean it that way. I sometimes don't understand it myself..."

"I understand that too" she said with a smile.

She lives like a hermit in a modest house but is accepted like a Queen by those who go and seek her audience. History proves that people like her are seldom uti-

lized in their country, if their rulers are mediocre. By acknowledging their own faults and weaknesses. What a tragedy but what a wonderful association.

But the Princess is still active and keeps herself uptodate with the political developments. She cannot tolerate a petty mind or hypocrisy and sometimes gives vent to such feelings. She wrote a letter to the 'DAWN' under the caption 'The Genesis of Pakistan' which was published — A standing ovation for Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Mr. Nisar Osmani and Dawn for publishing an outspoken interview 'The Genesis of Pakistan' in Dawn Independence Day supplement:

How many people, especially women, would have participated in the Pakistan Movement and offered mass sacrifices for its creation had it been feared, or even suspected, that they would soon be reduced to the indignities of forfeiting their basic rights and freedoms explicit under Divine Law and enjoyed even under foreign domination; and that women-mothers, wives, sisters and daughters — would be condemned to slavery by their own fathers and sons?

It hardly helps to serve any useful purpose, with all sorts of people now alleging 'Mr. Jinnah said to us this' or the 'Quaid-i-Azam intended that', because the Quaid is not alive to deny or confirm what he, in fact, had intended. What did, however, matter then, what matters now and what will matter in the future is what the masses, including women, wanted and intended for themselves, what they were given to understand, or led to believe by the Muslim League and its leaders, what hopes were built up; and to what extent their aspirations have been fulfilled.

We the common 'fold' understood Mr. Jinnah as having preached, intended, assured and reassured us of pure and simple democracy, enabling the nation at any time and for all times to choose and determine its own course.

It was not the Quaid's colleagues, supporters and well-wishers alone who drew the same conclusions, even his opponents expected nothing else but pure and simple democracy from him. As an example, one could refer to a certain political Maulana (not Abul Kalam Azad) who, in opposing the creation of Pakistan, declared:

"Jinnah is not fit to be even a 'chaprasi' of a Muslim state."

Leaving no doubt as to what the Quaid-i-Azam intended;

And it is not remarkable that the same sanctimonious Maulanas do not hesitate to put words into the mouth of the Father of the Nation after his death, twist words and statements of the same unworthy 'chaprasi' to support a theocratic oligarchy and dictatorship?

Mian Daultana Sahib has, therefore, earned the deep gratitude and sincere admiration of the nation for putting the record straight and confirming in the unequivocal language that:

"There can be no two opinions on the genesis of Pakistan."

Pakistan emerged on the map of the world purely through democratic processes to provide a separate homeland for the Muslims.

Non-party polls are not elections, not democracy, but a negation of elections and democracy.... and a patent cloak for the continuance of dictatorship.

Non-party elections is not 'something'. It is a denial of everything. It is worse than the 'nothing' you have today, because it is a device to mock democracy...

Courageous observations, beautifully expressed.

Ironically, having established our 'homeland' through 'purely democratic process' we progressively lost the right, as well as the opportunity of running it according to our original hopes and aspirations. To apportion blame for this is better left to history which neither overlooks nor condones anything; but a visible link might be traceable to the assassination of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan.

I often wonder when, and by whom were such undefined and deceptive terms as the ideology of Pakistan and 'Nizam-i-Mustafa' coined? Mr. Jinnah was too honest, too precise, too conscientious to have favoured, or associated himself with slogans that could mean anything or everything or nothing.

These very terms have been used with equal facility by secular and non-secular parties to justify and expalin diametrically opposed philosophies and manifestos. In short, these are good examples of the deception systematically used for the exploitation of the masses by those who hoped to gain power and those who atcually wielded it.

No wonder Pakistan gave birth to Bangladesh.

Greater frustrations and disillusionment are eroding the country again. Pakistan is once more enchaised. There is, however, more manifest danger of the mother losing her own life in the process of bearing her next child.

It is never wise to turn a blind eye to the fact that human nature revolts against force and repression while frustration breed hatred.

More people have been alienated from Islam by recent enforcements and coersions than is acknowledged. They were more sincere as voluntary believers by free choice. Moreover, daughters of today are the mothers of tomorrow. If they are insulted, deprived of their self-respect, independence and liberties in the name of their faith, they are unlikely to breed a generation (males included) who will have the required devotion, esteem, reverence and confidence in Islam to be able to do honour to it. For, 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned'.

I was impressed by her letter and wrote to her a public letter also published in the 'Dawn' captioned 'The Princess' Call' — I have read Princess Abida Sultan's letter (August 23). I would be grateful if this message could be conveyed to her on her birthday which falls on August 28.

"I salute you for your convictions and your courage. I hope you will forgive me if I tell the readers who you are. A number of them don't know you — they are too young — they don't even know what the Pakistan Movement was. How are they to know you. You have never been in any Government.

How are they to know that you were born heir to the throne of Bhopal? And that you inspected the parades in uniform on horseback? When His Highness was away, you presided over the Cabinet meetings. They haven't seen you play polo and play a game well with your handicap of three. They haven't stood with you on the ground to take on a tiger in those jungles of Bhopal. Or fly in a plane with you, with you at the controls. You know your Quran better than most, I know that. And remember where the Quran says, "they have split the Ummah into tribes, into Biradris, into factions, don't waste your time on them, we destroy them when they reach these limits, like we have done before. Your duty is to give the message, it is We Who do the rest, do not be disappointed.

"So dear friend do not be upset. Whatever He does He does for the better. He is not the God of only Muslims. And Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the property of only the Muslims, he is for the universe. Islam is not confined to a particular dress, or climate or country; and an eskimo can be as good a Mulsim as a man living in Makka. And he lives where the sun doesn't set for six months but he knows the principles of Islam and he adjusts the rituals to the principles of this great simple faith, which we have made so complicated so that only a few can claim that they are the ones who can understand and fathom the intricacies of it, when it has none.

I salute you for your call. I also came here in a belief. I was not forced out from there. Neither were you. We came here, because we wanted to. You lost a throne by coming here. I had no throne to lose. But I also lost all that was dear to me too.

From here I can do more for those who created Pakistan, the majority who could not come, than I could have done from there where they have become a 'Passive Voice', because no voice from here, can remind them, that we are here if you need us.

We came alone, we brought no Biradri with us. We came because we were going to make a Biradri here, a Pakistani Biradri under the Pakistan flag. I know we are after 40 years still alone, you and I, but at least we have kept our identity as Pakistanis first and Pakistanis last.

We are Muslims because we were born of Muslim parents. That is whay there is tolerance and no compulsion in Islam. It is not 'their' fault if they were born something else. Be tolerant; be human. Your Quran says so and the man to whom it was revealed says so. And I here read this book from the age of seven and I have said my prayers regularly from that age too. Islam to me today is Insaniat. It is good conduct. It is practice not preaching. And a showman is the most condemned in Quran — he is termed a Munafiq.

I will now stop. Well done and continue with your crusade.

Remember when we sat on the terrace of your Nur-us-Sabah Palace in Bhopal overlooking that beautiful panorama of undulating hills with the famous Bhopal Tal in the background and talked of the necessity of a sovereign Muslim State in the sub-continent? It was a dream that came true. Some doubted it. You didn't. I didn't. We have great resources of faith and hope, by the grace of God. Pray for that Islam which was so simple to undertstand it and it united us and not for that kind of confusion that produced Bangladesh. Pray, please — you are a good woman and a good lady. You like poetry. Remember this.

Khud badaltay nahin Quran ko badal detay hein.
Hooyay kis Darja Faqirhan-e-Harum — bey Taufiq."

I had requested Dawn to publish it on her birthday 28th of August which they kindly did.

She was kind enough to reply with a telegram:

"A charming birthday greeting deeply touched
Thank you — God bless you — Love — Abida."

Nawab Hamidullah Khan (Mian) of Bhopal, was probably the ablest Ruler among all the princes that I knew. I found him more normal than most. There were reasons for it. He had a strict and normal upbringing. He was the third son of the Ruler, his mother. Both his elder brothers died early. The gap between him and his second brother was of 17 years. He was the baby of Her Highness. But she did not spoil him. She sent him to the then Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College, Aligarh, which later became the Aligarh Muslim University. This was perhaps the first time that a prince of a princely state entered a real public school, other than those that had been created for the princes and aristocracy called Chiefs Colleges (were not public schools, but Royal Schools). At Ajmer (for Rajputana), at Indore (for Malwa and Central India), at Rajkot (for Gujrat and Kathiawar) and at Lahore (for Punjab). They were run on the lines of British Public Schools which are really not so public. The object of these was to produce this influential elite group into a society who would look Indian but would have a British way of thinking. This was all part of the great scheme of how to rule this haphazard unruly sub-continent.

I had some interesting talks with His Highness when I got to know him well. He was an admirer of the British, for their integrity in India and efficiency. And had many good friends among them. One of them was the Auk (Field Marshal Sir

Auchinleck, the C-in-C of the Army). But he also knew of the devious manner in which the British could delve to retain their interests. I think if an accident of birth had not placed him where he found himself, he would have been a revolutionary. He was a nationalist and a very patriotic one.

When I got to understand him, in late 30's he was well entrenched in national politics and was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. He had collected some very able people round him, like Sir Zafrullah Khan (Constitutional Adviser), Sir Joseph Bhore (Chief Minister), Shoaib Qureshi, son-in-law of Maulana Mohammad Ali (Political Adviser), etc. etc. He had selected as principal Secretary for the Chamber of Princes Mian Maqbool Mehmood an able administrator from the Punjab.

His daily Luncheons were really political discussion meetings. I had the good fortune to attend a number of these when I was with him in Bhopal. I learnt so much about the national politics from an angle which I appreciate today much more than I did then, for the objective and opposite approach with which the subject matters were freely discussed.

Some claimed that it was Sir Zafrullah who first put on paper the plan of Pakistan, in some coherent manner. I think they are right because it was the brainwave of Hamidullah Khan spelt out concisely on paper by Sir Zafrullah, and executed at the Conference table by the most eloquent, and sharp brained lawyer of the time Mr. Jinnah. Sir Zafrullah was first Foreign Minister of Pakistan, because of this background. And in my humble opinion today Hamidullah Khan of Bhopal was only second to Mr. Jinnah, in the making of Pakistan. Hamidullah Khan worked behind the scheme — he was the Solicitor — Mr. Jinnah the Silk (the Advocate). He had the case prepared and Mr. Jinnah presented it in the World Court. But in the humdrum of politics such finer aspects of truth are forgotten.

> **Manzil to uneh mili jo sharik-e-safar na they**
> *The destination was reached by those — in the end,*
> *Who weren't even companions in the journey — to the end.* (S. A.)

He paid for this after partition. The Congress High Command never forgave him for this.

I got my political lesson from His Highness. He taught me the scope of it, the rough and smooth of it, the dedication and the contradictions of it, the ups and downs of it, the humdrum and the loneliness of it, and the depression of it and the long and the short of it. Politics — a dedicated service turned into a service for self. He went through it all, quietly and clamly. He never complained. He was a very unemotional and self controlled person. He talked little and heard a lot. He enjoyed "buffoonery" for relaxation. But he could not suffer fools.

In early 1960 he asked me to arrange deep sea fishing for him in the area where I was Ambassador — Malaysia and Singapore, where he was coming to stay with me in Kuala Lumpur. One morning when I was leaving for my morning ride, I was told by my orderly Mohammad Hussain, with a sad voice, that Nawab Sahib of Bhopal was dead "I have just heard the All India Radio". I got out of my car and told my wife. I went to my study and sat alone looking out of the window at the distant mountains covered in the morning mist — like a dead body in a shroud. My friend must be covered in his shroud by now too I thought at that time. I had lost a friend. I had lost a father, a second time. The first one I don't remember, but this one I will remember and miss all my life.

Hamidullah Khan, I feel, died a sad and bitter man. But he never complained or aired his views, in fact if after Partition, the subject of politics of the sub-continent was raised, he avoided any discussions "What has happened has happened — *Jo*

bona tha so hogaiya". A number of people asked him to record the events for posterity but he was not interested . "Who will read? Who will learn? No one has yet learnt from history. They will try and alter history". He was rambling in the past on the second floor, of Hotel Martines facing the Mediterranean in Cannes in France in August '50 looking far away over the beach towards the sea, puffing his Huqa when he said this. I was sitting near him and Sir Abdur Rehman (the Chairman Judge of the 1951 Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case) was on my right peering through his binocular, hoping to spot some beautiful two-legged mermaids. He was His Highness' legal and financial adviser. He had settled in Karachi and was trying to create the atmosphere of Delhi in this new Capital. He also died a heart-broken man, seeing all his aspirations slowly disappearing like vapour in the rising sun. The sons of the soil, today, have forgotten the truth, the naked fact, that the makers of Pakistan were the ones who came to the new country abandoning their old soil. Sometimes it reminds me of the manner in which the new-comers to USA 'won', conquered, the heart of the west for themselves. Some aspects were similar but the spirit of that sustained effort was different to than here. It was understandable — they were born free and here they had been born far from being free. Colonial rule does create a mentality of its own, a particular kind among the ruled. I have written a book on this subject, in an attempt to analyse, but why? There is no room for all that here — enough. Hamidullah Khan's pictures are all over my house in court dress and on polo ponies. Not that I need any picture of him to remind me of him. He was indeed Hamid — one of the names of God — Praised and Glorious. How can I forget his kindness.

The Quran says:
Hal Jaza Ul Ehsan-e-Illul Ehsan.
There is no return of kindness but kindness.

BARODA AND COOCH BEHAR

The State of Cooch Behar was the only Princely state in Bengal. Its original name was Kuch Behar, Cooch was the sophisticated one which came later. The state lay in the north of Bengal, bounded on the north by the Western Dwars, and on the South by the Rangpur District. Some detached tracts also belonged to the State.

The State formed a triangular plain, intersected by rivers. The greater portion was fertile and well cultivated, but there were some tracts of jungle in the east. The soil, which was light, had been washed down from the neighbouring Himalayas. The rivers had a tendency to cut new channels for themselves.

Rice was grown on about three-fourths of the cultivated area. Other kinds of grain, jute and tobacco were also raised. The State contained the capital of the ancient Hindu Kingdom of Kamrup, which was overthrown by the Afghan kings of Gaur towards the close of the 15th century. On their downfall, the country was

overrun by wild tribes from the north-east. Among these the Kochs came to the front, and ultimately founded the kingdom of Kuch Behar. The greatest monarch of the line was Nar Narayan, who began to reign about 1550 A.D. He conquered the whole of Kamrup, and built temples in Assam of which ruins still exist bearing inscriptions in his name. He compelled the Deb Raja of Bhutan to pay tribute, and extended his power southward. The Koch kingdom did not long retain its independence, and affairs fell into confusion.

In 1863, the Raja died, leaving a son only 10 months old. A British Commissioner was appointed to manage the State during his minority. Among the many reforms introduced were the following: A complete Survey of the State and settlement of the land revenue; the reorganization of the Police and the establishment of an education department; the construction of good carriage roads with bridges, with an efficient system of postal and telegraphic communication. The young Raja was educated at Patna, under an able European officer, and afterwards attended law lectures for three years at the Presidency College, Calcutta. In 1878, he married with a daughter of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84 — The founder of Brahmo Samaj, who did much to reform Bengali Society, in particular the Hindu Society in general), and in the same year he paid a visit to England. He attained his majority in October 1883. The higher title of Maharaja was conferred on him.

When I visited Cooch Behar last in 1942, great improvements had been affected. There were handsome public buildings. English and vernacular schools. An excellent dispensary and hospital had been built. And a splendid new palace created with spacious grounds and gardens planned by Ma. She was a very able, energetic and benevolent ruler. She was destined to rule this State as Regent. She married the second son of the ruler, her husband who was only No. 2. His elder brother however drank himself to death and she became the Maharani within a year or so. Her husband did not live long either and was dead within 8 years, when she was only 30. So the Cooch Behar I saw was the handiwork of Ma.

Bhaiya (Ma's son) took my Squadron's senior Risaldar, Fateh Khan (an Awan from Dandan Shah Bilavel in Attock District now in Pakistan) to Cooch Behar to smarten up and reorganize the Palace Guards. I had the honour of inspecting them and found them very smart. They were a force that also guarded the boundaries of their state in conjunction with the Police. I was taken to the barracks of the Police and wrote in the Visitors Book 'the turnout and efficienty of the Ruler, is evident everywhere.'

This is not a history of Princes and Princesses, as these identities are mere accidents of birth. It is an attempt to show that these fortunate or unfortunate individuals, were also human beings. They also had a heart and a head that guided them or misguided them. They also cried and laughed. They may not have felt the pangs of hunger but they did feel the pains of over indulgence. They lived surrounded by servants and retainers, and yet they were lonely people. They had many admirers and worshippers but few friends. They had so many 'friends', sometimes, that they couldn't differentiate between the true and the false. Sometimes they got so disillusioned with all this that they ceased to make friends.

It is not easy to write the history of a man or a woman or of an epoch. These are difficult undertakings. One cannot tell lies and yet one cannot tell the whole truth either. So what is one to tell? And yet tell one must because some of them have been fascinating and most interesting people. Some could have been great if the Paramount Power had allowed them. They lost the art of the fight for survival which makes a person. But to pass away their time they learnt other arts and some became artists in the field of that art.

For me, a soldier, it has been an interesting study — how lack of a struggle makes individuals soft. How over-enthusiasm or bitterness has affected a sound and objective approach. And then how the sycophants have succeeded in painting a picture, at times, when it did not exist. And then how, some highly intelligent amongst them, when exposed to the stark naked facts of life, have blinked, in the glaring light of truth and have, instead of facing the light either gone back into darkness or put on dark glasses which showed them only what they wanted to see.

Some of them I have known have possessed such fine souls, who have got lost in the crowd of their own kind and have become meaningless for posterity. Nowadays, it is only the certain circles or certain limited spheres, that they have a historical significance. The ones that I am going to write about in this book would not have meant more to me or to a few others, outside the art galleries of portraits of beautiful faces and figures, if they had not possessed something more than an accident of birth — an identity which they had inherited, on the creation of which they had had no say. The two ladies particularly would have been nothing more than two beautiful Maharanis if they had not possessed searching souls and able minds.

In this chapter I have tried to write the story of these two — mother and daughter — as I saw them and as I knew them. It is not their history, it is their story since their personality finds expression in some step of their political career, their ideas about the improvements that could be brought about in their states, one, the mother as the Regent and the other, the daughter, as a wife, with a close influence on her husband the Maharaja and then as an active politician in the service of their respective states, pre-independence and post-independence. Their general attitude towards progress in the sub-continent, towards the social order, and the problems in general is significant from any standards. Irrelevant, though most fascinating and glamorous, was their appearance and conduct on the stage and course of elite society at aristocratic gatherings, yet it is in the field of human struggle in the midst of which they had taken birth, that I am going to attempt to portray these two very 'attractive' personalities.

Whether they would have been able to accomplish more if they had not been handicapped by their accidents of birth, in a restricted though privileged society, is a matter for the reader to judge. All that the writer can do is to write what he saw and felt when he observed them on various occasions when he was fortunate enough to be present. He can only express his feelings. His pen cannot write a judgement on things that he did not see or was not aware of.

The reader can ask — but why do you write about these two when you find your pen is so restricted? My answer would be because both of them have left a mark on my sensitive Self. The 'Self' in this case is the Mind and the Heart. The mind may be the ultimate weapon, but it is the heart that is the main cause of initiation of things. In the make-up of what I am today these two must have played some significant role or I wouldn't be sitting and writing about them in the manner that I do. They must have left a deep mark on me somewhere. The other reason perhaps could be that whatever I have read or heard about these two has not done enough justice to either of them.

What I have heard and read about them has been restricted to their identities as first Princesses and then Maharanis. I have yet to read an objective writing on their having been seen and judged as 'human beings' — with all the elations and depression that this expression may contain. They also may have had a difference of opinion with their brothers and sisters, their husband, etc. They also had their hour of gloom and happiness. They had thrust upon them great wealth and accesses to power. Their acts or tricks of kindness towards friend or foe. Their

word to their friends, men or women, as expressed in their letters or authentic conversations. We know little of these two 'women' who did set the pace, for fashion in their days. I hope the daughter will have the opportunity to put her talents, sincerity and dedication to the service of the people and her country, more than she has had or has been allowed to do upto now. There is a lot to learn from the lives of both these women by Indian women and the society of their country.

Both have had a taste of a public career. Both have had interesting private lives. Affairs of state and love affairs have happened the same way. They could be referred to on the same page of the diary. They derived their thrust from the same source. They complement one another. The study of what went on in their hearts will often give us more information concerning them than all the calculations from the official engagement cards and protocol writings.

There will be no place in my record for portraits of their highnesses. There will be hardly enough room in this book, to throw light on these two extraordinary persons — simple human beings — who were not only mother and daughter — but so much alike, yet sometimes, so difficult — to the ordinary eyes.

Before I go any further, it is essential to what Ma's progeny was — as the old saying goes:

> **'Piti par.put pita par ghora,**
> **Bohat nahen to thora thora.**
> *A son takes after mother, a horse after sire,*
> *If not much — little, little'.*

Ma's parents were exceptional people. And Ayesha was the daughter of Ma. Their relationship should be enough to produce the qualities of a Princess or a Queen.

Ma's father and mother (H.H. Gaekwar and Maharani of Baroda) were so different to one another, which produced an ideal harmony. He was kind to look at and with his words, was most gracious and yet he could be made of the hardest steel. Baro-Ma (The elder mother), as we called Ma's mother was different. She had inquisitive and sparkling eyes. First time I was taken in her presence was in Woodlands, Cooch Behar's Calcutta residence, a huge house with a cricket ground of its own, across the road was Belvadere,. the Viceroy's Calcutta residence (after the seat of the government had shifted to Delhi in 1911). I had had a briefing about her from the children so I braced myself when Ma was visiting Baro-Ma in her room and took me with her. The door was opened for Ma and I followed her. Ma made a bow to her mother with folded hands and I stood behind her rather nervously not knowing what to do. I was in this dilemma when a volley came from Baro-Ma, "Who is he?" Ma: "Bhaiya's friend". Then came the command, "Come close", and indicated that I should take the chair next to Ma. Then came another snap question, "What do you do?" Ma was determined to protect me and replied for me, "he is in the army, Bhaiya and Inderjit are in the same regiment." "What regiment?" Ma said, "7th Cavalry". I had not spoken upto now. "Do you play polo?" Ma must have thought that she had taken the sting out of her mother, looked at me suggesting with her eyes that I should now converse myself. I obeyed, "Yes, Your Highness". "Are you any good?" Ma chipped in, "hardly a question to ask". Baro-Ma smiled for the first time and spoke, "Do you like racing?" "Yes, Your Highness". "Have you any horse of your own?" "No, your Highness". "Stop calling me Your Highness Your Highness, call me what Inder Raja's (Ma's) children call me". This is how I got to call Her Highness of Baroda as Baro-Ma.

Everytime Baro-Ma and I happened to be at the same races, I was usually her errand boy for her bets.

My attraction for His Higheness of Baroda started much earlier — it was "Ghaibana" (out of sight), when I was small. Most of my childhood, when in Pataudi, was spent in the stables, being nice to the syces and particularly to the Headgroom (Bahadur) to whom I used to slip in an odd rupee or two when I could pick from the ladies of the Fort on my visits. My hero of course was Abdu Jamadar, the head of the establishment who drove me in the four-in-hand and the pairs. The particulars Tum-Tum I was attracted to was the one with yellow wheels. It had a crest on both sides in yellow on black. I must have been 7 or 8 when I made my first enquiry on this point. "What crest is that?" I had asked Abdu Jamadar. He had explained, 'This Tum-Tum was presented to Sarkar (my father, Ruler of Pataudi) by the Sarkar Gaekwar Sahib of Baroda at the Delhi Durbar.' This Durbar took place in 1911 — before I was born.

As I have mentioned somewhere earlier that I hardly remember my father but had the greatest attachment and admiration to him because as I grew up and got to know something about horses, I admired his selection of horses of both riding and carriage. People talked a lot about what a great administrator he was but I was not interested in that — he was my hero because he had selected good horses and the uniform he must have worn of the Imperial Cadet Corps at Delhi Durbar which must have attracted people to him. He was a very handsome man to the point of being talked about as a beautiful one. Nature did not allow him to bloom, he was so attractive that he was called back before he was 30.

I was also attracted to His Highness Gaekwar (Sayajirao III) because of his enlightened ideas on administration and other things. The attraction started when I read accounts in books of the abuse that was hurled at him by the British papers when he slipped up in correct protocol at the Durbar before the King-Emperor George V. The poor man being a highly strung person and not having been briefed correctly by those whose duty it was to do so, while turning after his bow got imbalanced and turned his back on the King-Emperor and forgot to bow to the Queen-Empress, and then enquired from one of the goldstick bearer where to go next.

He already had charges hurled at him in the press in his State by writing stuff that was considered by the British as 'seditious'.

He had become my hero and so I looked upto him as the champion of our cause — the 'cause' of course, at that time was not very clear to me. But at that age such frivolities didn't matter. And last but not least was the fact that he was my Ma's father.

I liked very much some of his correspondence with the British Residents of his state and some of his letters to the Viceroy. Baro-Ma, his second wife, after the demise of his first one, was also a great fighter. Readers will be curious to note that both his Maharanis were given the same name after marriage — Chimnabai I and II. This I found rather confusing for a while but got used to this fact but I still did not know the reason for it.

Lord Minto, before he arrived in Baroda, had already aired his fear of seditious literture in Gujrat but was careful not to mention it during his visit to Baroda in 1909. However, he had publicly assured the Maharaja that "his bold attempt to separate the judicial and executive functions had elicited the warm interest of the Government of India".

His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao-III was an enlightened ruler and a statesman. His ability to organize, administer and foresee have been his distinct qualifications. He had worked out a scheme for useful co-operation by the princes of India. He

expressed his ideas in a letter (7 November 1917) to His Highness Maharaja of Nabha:

> "I think that the formation of a separate Council of the representatives of Princes, something after the model of the German's might meet the case... I had suggested a somewhat similar idea to the Viceroy some years ago. I offer these suggestions with considerable hesitation, as I feel that this is a matter which lies more in the province of the scientific constitution – framers...."
>
> "I have no doubt that if any matters which concern the princes of India come into discussion, the Government of India will consult the Princes before coming to any conclusion. There are, however, many questions of policy which it is essential for the Princes to open up on their own initiative.... It would be better for the Princes to restrict their attention to the following universally important matters:
>
> "1. The formation of a Council of States;
>
> "2. The formation of a properly representative Court of Appeal in matters of dispute between the Government of India and Indian Princes.... "
>
> "The Princes should not lose sight of the fact that these reforms are only the means to an end. The end is the reduction, or even cessation of interference in purely internal matters and the right to be consulted in matters which affect both the Native States and British India equally".

In the following year, he wrote to His Highness of Kohlapur elaborating his views, proposing among other things that there should be in India Provincial and State autonomy, all questions relating to internal interest to be dealt with by Provincial Government and the State respectively, and that for the discussion of Imperial matters and internal affairs affecting British India and the State jointly there should be established a House of Princes' Representative, to meet simultaneously with the Imperial Legislative Assembly.

This great Maharaja needs a book to himself. I have very briefly written about him to give an idea to the reader of the kind of ruler he was, but unfortunately, the Paramount Power did not appreciate his far-sightedness. Both he and Nawab Hamidullah Khan of Bhopal were, I am sure, revolutionaries at heart. The latter became the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and for over a decade led that 'August House' and unfortunately an 'Autumn House'. He resigned in disgust in 1947.

Now I must go back to Ma and Ayesha and not take on my jumps before time — I have written enough to illustrate what a man Sayajirao III was.

It is not possible to describe fully a complete portrait of their life — it was so full of fire and fun — particularly that of the mother. But even to give a limited picture one has to follow the tempo of these two. I am therefore bound to the words of the person being described, but cannot let that person speak too much. A person always in truth, explains himself better than anyone else can do for him, even when he is mistaken, or when he is lying. He reveals himself to those who come afterwards, to those who know the truth. But the author, if he is to be interesting, must forget that he, too, knows the end. Only if, from moment to moment, he describes the feelings as they must have been experienced by one without foresight of the completed destiny, will he be able to generate that tension which in actual life, made the sequence of events vibrant with passion.

I do not know what will emerge after the portrayal, which brings us into proximity with the object. It may give the impression of being a work of pure fancy. My

observations may be limited. They may be more distant than others at times. But the mountain, as a whole, can only be seen from a distance. My imaginative creation is bound to be my own and 'the own' is also affected by the conditions of time, like the 'objects' under study themselves were.

In this book, all is written from what I saw and read what they wrote now and again. All the nimbus, all the illusion, with which writers sometime surround personalities like these two, I hope will not diminish their stature. I hope it will grow, and prove what a splendid thing truth is, when anyone has the courage to speak it. Their lives were written by the hand of fate; its full meaning will not reveal itself to one who gives reign to imagination, but only to him who gives himself up to the fate of love.

I hope it will be a story of protrayal — what a person can achieve through self-confidence and courage, through passion and imagination, through industry and will. Today in the age of technology and speed when man goes to the moon and comes back and when going round the Earth in a shuttle seems child's play, youth will appreciate the youth in time.

This is the story, of two girls, two women, of two mothers who in the course of their journey through their lives have had a full life, which they made, and which, in its turn, made them suffer the most violent emotions. The daughter has yet to accomplish her role, so that she may leave her name, like the one after whom she was named by her mother — Ayesha — did, in the world. Life can play tricks too — one never knows what is in store for us. Those who are remembered are not those who leave behind heirs or heirlooms, but those who do something for others. It is the ideas that live, not-monuments.

I have tried to compare the two, mother and daughter, but it is not easy and not complete, for the simple reason that one is no more and therefore the curtain has fallen on her and the audience can give their verdict according to their taste and feelings. The other, the daughter, is still very much on the stage, and one hopes and prays that there are still many more acts to her play before the curtain falls — which does in the end on all. So the judgement or even the assessment cannot be final. We have to wait and see. Is nature going to use her for tasks other than what she keeps herself busy with today? Is she going to come back and make her contribution in public life again? Or has one experience been enough for her?

Her mother was not happy about her coming into active politics. She asked me to try and dissuade her. Her husband was not very keen either, but gave in, in the end, when he found that she was so keen. I remember receiving a letter from her, written in an aircraft on a flight to somewhere, when she was going to make her final decision. Earlier she has written to say that she felt that she must do something to serve the people in their plight and had said, 'you would understand'... Yes, I did understand and had written back to her to say that I supported her desire in this noble cause but had warned her that though the experience may be educating and even exciting it had its other angles as well; angles of which she was not aware and neither was I, as knowing politics was quite different to practising it. The rules were different. The techniques were different. Sometime they played football with rules of polo, in which there was no off-side. I must admit that I did not dissuade her, in fact I encouraged her but warned her to be careful. I knew her enough to feel that she was genuine when she said that she wanted to do something for her people, and the way of politics is, or should be, the best way of dedicated service is in the cause of social service.

A great majority of men and women, in ordinary times, pass through life without contemplating or criticising, as a whole, either their own conditions or those of the world at large. They find themselves born with a certain position or place in



H.H. Cooch Behar Bhaiya's Grandfather



Her H. Cooch Behar Bhaiya's Grandmother



Ma (Princess Indira of Baroda) in European dress coming out of Paddington London Registery Office with her husband the Maharaj Kumar of Cooch Behar (1886-1922) who at the death of his elder brother within the year became the Maharaja) but also died at the early age of 36



Ma - Princess Indira of Baroda - with her father H.H. Baroda out riding in England



Ma and lady Sassoon at Moon House 1939 - Srinagar, Kashmir



Ma Maharani of Cooch Behar a young widow at the age of 30



Ma relaxing in her drawing room in Moon House - 1939



Ma drinking water at Chashma Shahi, supported by Ayesha



The mixed Cooch Behar - Pataudi Hockey Team

Bhaiya at Bolarrum in 7th light Cavalry Four wheeler in front of my House - M. 48





At Tennis at Sikandarabad Club



His Rolls - Bentley at M.48



Bhaiya - at Soldiering



Bhaiya a wounded soldier - a minor injury during manoeuvres in Bolarum area



Devika and 'Punch', Woodlands Calcutta 1940



Bheem and self - Woodlands - Calcutta December 1940

Bhaiya - at polo on Trimulgherry ground





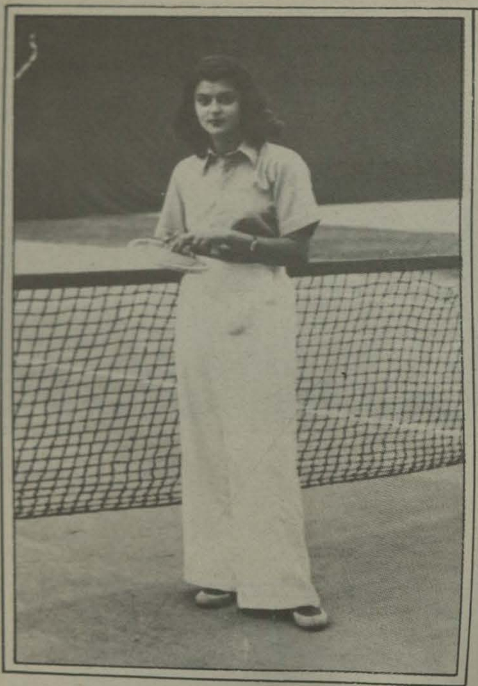
Bhaiya ready for manoeuvres



Ayesha on 'Indiscretion', No.I Polo Ground Srinagar 1939



Bhaiya posing



With a Tennis Racket at Amar Singh Club



Srinagar Golf Course



The Potter (the beginning)



The Potter (finished Article)



With a book at Moon House



At Moon House posing



At Tanmerg rest house



Birthday cake being cut 20 May 1939



Playing 'Snakes and Ladders' at Tanmerg Banglow Kashmir on Ayesha's Birthday 20 May 1939, was held 3 days earlier-her Birthday being on 23 May-because of authors departure date.



Princess Ayesha (Gayatri Devi) of Cooch Behar Later the 3rd Maharani of Jaipur



Ma - Her Highness Cooch Behar Srinagar 1939

society, and they accept what each day brings forth without much effort of thought beyond what the immediate present requires. Almost as instinctively as the beasts of the field, they seek that satisfaction of the needs of the moment, without much forethought, and without considering them by sufficient effort how the entire conditions of their lives could be changed. A certain percentage, guided by personal ambition make the effort of thought and will which is necessary to place themselves among the more fortunate members of the community; but very few among those are seriously concerned to secure for others the advantages which they seek for themselves. It is only a few rare and exceptional persons who have that kind of love towards mankind at large that makes them unable to endure actually the general mass of evil and suffering, regardless of any relation it may have to their own lives. These few, driven by sympathetic pain, will seek, first in thought and then in action, for some way of escape, some new system of society by which life may become richer, more full of joy and less full of preventable evils than what it may be seen at present.

The daughter, by her actions, seemed to have belonged to that rare category of people that we have talking about. She may have been inexperienced or even ignorant of the peculiar kind of politics of our part of the world, of the danger of punishment by the holders of power. What she went through later as a result of her plunge into politics does prove one point that she did have the moral courage, and sincerity of purpose when she launched herself in the battle for the improvement of the lot of her people.

The mother was a wiser person where it was a question of assessing the kind of the peculiarity of politics in our part of the world. She was not a person of the masses. Of course her times were different, people were different, their approach and values in life were different. There is a 'form' in the society that was maintained. There was respect for the elders. There was a helping hand for the youngsters and the needy. There were things that were 'done' and there were also things that were 'not done'. There was a purdah on certain things. Dignity was demanded and given by the privileged. There was hijab (modesty — veil) between parents and children. There was distance between ranks and ages. All this produced a kind of society that one misses so much today. The mother dealt with politics as a Regent of her state, but never practised it herself, she abhorred it.

When the daughter entered politics to serve, the world was different, another world war had taken place, technology had developed to an extent that not only an atom bomb had been produced and exploded but missiles had been produced to hurl at one another with lethal heads. From this thrust a man had been launched in space around the Earth. And soon went to the moon, to come back again, to report that it was all ashes on that moon that sparkled at night. The radio was joined by TV to educate mankind and also to brainwash mankind. An accident in the East became news in the West. The world had shrunk in terms of time; travel to the other side of the earth was no problem — air travel had made travel safer, quicker and easier. In our part of the world the average man became conscious of his rights. He soon snatched the independence from his alien masters. He was now independent — free. But was he? Or was it that the old foreign masters had been replaced by new 'local' masters. Had the common man learnt to select his leaders by the new method of ballot boxes that he had inherited from his past masters? He was to learn this by trial and error. The great thing was that he had the right to raise a voice, a hand to put up and the right to elect a person of his choice if he wanted to. It is in this atmosphere of new awakening, of the people and the newer conditions and changes in the life of the privileged people, in which the

Princes were in the forefront. It is in these new conditions that the daughter launched herself in politices.

Those who live a life fruitful to themselves, to their friends, or to the world, are inspired by hope and sustained by joy; they see in imagination the things that might be. They are not preoccupied with anxiety but they bear affection and respect freely, and the reward comes of itself without their seeking. In their work, they are not haunted by jealousy of competition, but concerned with the actual matter that has to be done. In politics, they do not spend time and passion defending unjust privileges of their class or nation, but aim at making the world as a whole happier, less full of conflict between rival groups and more full of human beings where growth has not been dwarfed and stunted by oppression.

A life in this spirit was what the daughter had dreamed of and desired. What she found in life we will see. What hopes and aspirations one felt in her we will see. There is a lot to see and one hopes and prays that one will see it. If her will and perseverance is any yardstick and if 'the Being' wills it, there is no reason why she cannot leave her name behind, as her co-name did, in history. We will see? God is Great!

To continue with the story of these two, the mother from an early age exhibits a quality that was to bear fruit later, she wanted all or nothing and could not rest until she had got it. It is for this, I suppose, that one finds that she never gave herself up to any one person or any one thing. She demonstrated her will from early age. So did the daughter. The only difference was that the mother was more forthright and knew exactly what she wanted at any time and got it. The daughter had made up her mind from an early age about what she wanted, but wasn't sure how to go about getting it, being careful in taking her fences. The mother had a strong will with a big heart — a dangerous combination in a beautiful woman of high society. She was apt to take the bit firmly in her teeth when taking high fences with wide ditches. The daughter was more careful and not so sure of herself. If the mother gave herself for the first time in her life to a man, she did it with defiance; she broke an old tradition of her traditional family, she married a man of her own choice and not that of her parents. She married a man outside her caste — he was not a Marhatta. The daughter set her sight on an outsider too and one who already had two wives. Both mother and daughter become widows earlier than they should have become; the mother much earlier than the daughter at the age of 30. So they were similar in many ways, but as the reader will find as he goes along, in some cases quite dissimilar. And yet in the later part of their lives both were heartbroken, the mother let down by a man and the daughter by men-at-large. The mother died a lucky person trying to gather younger people round her, to amuse her, to forget the past. The daughter did the same thing but with a little difference — she wanted to forget so much, that she never allowed herself to be in one place or with one person for long, frightened of creating new attachments? Still unsure of herself. Or just frightened of another nightmare that she had gone through in her sincere efforts of serving her people. Both were let down by people who exploited them. Both suffered from being sincere and having courage of their convictions and both were misled by being naive in matters they both thought they knew, but didn't. Both were loved and admired. Both were hated, and maligned; the price they paid for what they were — simple persons at heart. The mother in many ways was much simpler than her daughter. But then her times were different, the age was different, the people were different. They weren't so petty. They weren't so vindictive. And there weren't so many. And finally this charge is completely wrong that they were both self-centered and passionately longed for a perpetuation of their own age? We shall see.

WAR

It was the Spring of 1939 that found Ma, Ayesha, Maneka and Kamal ('Baby' daughter of Nawab Khusrojung, brought up by Ma, with her own children, like her own daughter, after the death of her mother in childbirth) first in Jammu and then in Srinagar, the Kashmir valley. The Cooch Behars had rented the Moon House, near Badami Bagh (an almond garden) close to the bank of the river Jhelum which meandered through the city of Srinagar, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir State. It was there that I really got to know the family.

I have sub-titled this part as the war because the second World War sparked off by Hitler in September, 1939, but more important than that to me, my whole way of life was changed in that year.

The time to spend in the valley of Srinagar is either in the spring when the blossom is out and the whole place is like a huge flower market or in the fall, late October, when all the green has turned copper or gold, of various shades, according to the mood of the Sun and the Clouds. An ideal time for romantic moods and flights of thoughts, for all shades of people.

I was invited to the house when Ma got to know that I was there and particularly when she heard that I had not been well. I was Bhaiya's friend and had to be looked after. Inderjeet belonged to my regiment too and, what is more, to my squadron; so I needed special care. To the girls I was Dada's friend. It was this identity — 'Dada's friend' that was used, when it had to be, when introducing me to those to whom I was a stranger, like Lady Sasoon and other friends of Ma who were in the valley escaping from the sun, the heat and the humidity of Calcutta and Bombay.

Being what I was, I did not tolerate that identity for long and asserted my authority to change the practice. The girls were told that I was also somebody on my own. I remember the younger two asking me how they were to address me. I said, briefly 'by my name'. The elder of the three made no comment and had merely smiled. Later when she had to introduce me to someone in the Party she said, 'Brother of the Nawab of....' I was a bit annoyed at the time but had said nothing, later when I got to know her I reminded her of this and her quite innocent reply was, 'I meant to introduce you by your name but at the last minute felt too shy to call you by your actual name'. I have always remembered this and that is why I usually address her as 'Shy'. The name Ayesha has always been a bit awesome for me, connected as it is with my Prophet s.a.w.s., it was the name of his favourite wife and it was her name Ayesha that had stirred my curiosity in her. I hope she won't be upset if I am truthful, that the first attraction was to her name and then to her, as a person. It was curiosity that caused the pull.

When I really got to know her she was passing througth a difficult stage of her youth — she had fallen in love with a 'prince charming' who had become her puppy-love. He had booked her for marriage when she was barely 13. The environment of both had been quite different. And yet she had got it in her head that she was going to marry him, even if she was to be his third wife.

Ma had not encouraged her but had not discouraged her either. Ayesha was a bit of herself, Ma knew that and was therefore careful how she handled her. When I met Ayesha in 1939 she had been engaged for three years and nothing had come of it yet. There was strong opposition to it from Jodhpur, from where came both number one and number two wives — both daughters of the Ruler; one was the aunt of the other. Both had two children each, the first a daughter and a son (in

that order) and the other two sons. The second marriage was supposed to have been a love marriage, the Maharaja had seen her at a wedding and had fallen in love, in spite of knowing that she was the niece of his wife. But considerations which may seem preposterous to us were not looked down upon in conditions that prevailed in these parts. The Maharaja had been adopted at the age of 12 because the old Maharaja had no son from the Maharani but children from 'others', how many these were, no one really knew. So when you have been brought up in such circumstances you don't put 'marriage' on such a sacrosanct pedestal. It was understandable from his point of view — a wife who could keep his company 'outside' and not just inside the palace walls. A wife who could be with him on the Polo grounds and other places, house parties abroad, and clubs and restaurants. The senior two were not trained for that and what more were not prepared to lead that kind of life. But her approach for aspiring to be a number three, even if he was what he was, a rich Maharaja and a Polo player, was not understood by most. How could she compromise on her background, her mother being such a sophisticated person and both her grandmothers, patenral and maternal, so enlightened on such subjects — of child marriage and dual marriages, and what they couldn't understand, they attributed to other motives. His motives were understood. Hers weren't. Love is blind, but some thought that in her case it was not so blind and that it was the glare of glamour that was turning her puppy love to 'love'. This they thought was the guiding star to her burning ambitions, taking her from the green and watery, thatched roofed mud houses of Cooch Behar, to the arid hills with fortresses supposedly full of treasures collected over centuries by the rulers of Jaipur because of their close associations with the Moghul Court, who could afford a small Peacock Throne, just to sit in it once a year. They had many thrones of jewels in thier coffers. The world is full of unkind people. But a number of them who did not belong to this petty category were also raising their eye-brows at a person like her accepting to be number three, anywhere for any reason.

I don't really remember her as a growing girl, because one really never took notice of these girls when they were around, I was so involved with my horses and Bhaiya and his adventures in which I had to take some very quick decisions sometimes, being the only completely sober person in the party, to bring him home.

Therefore when I met her in Srinagar, for a while, I found her very aloof, with an air of detachment, as if she was enduring life without enjoying it. This I must admit stirred my curiosity. I myself was passing through a difficult phase. I had married a charming and most attractive lady, a second cousin of mine, on the spur of the moment when leaving for my regiment from Mussourie, without knowing her, in the hope of filling the void that had been created by the Quetta earthquake of 1935 when I had lost my only elder sister, who was a little mother, as well my brother-in-law whom I loved. After four years it dawned on me that the void could never be filled and that our children could never live because of our misfortune, my wife and I had an R.H. factor clash. Our first child, a boy, died in late 1936 within hours of perfect birth and no one was sure till later what the cause was — perfect child dead within 48 hours. The same thing happened to our second child, again a boy, perfect birth but died of similar symptoms within 48 hours. There was no cure for the R.H. factor then, not at least in India.

This uncertainty had played on my mind for some time and I had just recovered from a very severe go of chicken-pox when I found the Cooch Behars in Moon House.

The name of the house was a good omen anyway though I could see no prospects of it from the mood of the inhabitants in it, 'there is nothing to do here',

was the general complaint. Ma could be a wonderful organizer, when she wanted to be and I remember her saying to me, 'Why don't you do something about it'. With this green light the prospects brightened and we soon had a Badminton court organized on the back lawn and with the timely arrival of the Hyderabad crowd, Uncle Mehboob's relatives and the Nizam's brother and wife and all the paraphernalia that goes with such people, were soon able to hold our first Badminton match. We had some stars like the Nizam's sister-in-law and one or two brothers but the rest were just there to fill the court and to have a nice tea at the end of the day. Ayesha and I were the organizers and partners in Badminton. We spent most of our time I remember in reconnaissance of the almond grove area and the grounds around the house and the bund for organizing further activities. Somehow they did not materialize, but we had a good excuse to wander around alone, doing nothing constructive, except perhaps avoiding the Badminton. During these wanderings we got to know one another a bit, without much exchange of conversation or that kind of talk that one creates when one doesn't know what to say or what to do. We seemed content from the very beginning of allowing ourselves that silent association which brings people together to a deeper understanding and tuning to one another, if there is a common wave length between them, to tune into. We enjoyed these silent walks.

In the evening bridge and poker card games were organized. I taught poker to the girls and some mothers but because of some unknown failing, superiority maybe at the time, or some other complex which develops on such occasions, did not participate myself but helped Ayesha in her bids in a game which required a lot of control of nerves and a poker face, an excuse of being a confidant. It was great fun because everyone cheated and shouted and yelled and at the end I don't remember anyone actually paying anything to anyone. This used to go on till quite late, or till Ma went to bed. The room in which we played this game was immediately under her bedroom, so if she retired early then we played some silent games, invented by some very quick imaginative minds on the spur of the moment, which were even greater fun for gaining each other's confidence. Whatever game was played we were always partners.

Before long I noticed that Ayesha's aloofness had gone and she was the active organizer of all events, Badminton, 'bad' Golf, Bad Tennis and the Bund Walks — 'bad' standards or even games, or even things are sometimes good for one. I found myself partnering Ayesha in all these activities, which was fun because she was a good loser and we were consistent with that. I had no time for Tennis or Badminton but I quite liked Golf and sometimes when we were not riding we played in the morning and in the evening. We started playing by ourselves before long, it was more fun-that was because both of us moved our Golf balls around without any hesitation whatsoever but we were very particular about the putting — no cheating was allowed on the green.

Riding was fun. She had a good seat. I noticed that she was inclined to ride in the old traditional style so I suggested she tried the way I rode pressing outwards with the foot on the inner part of the stirrup which pushed the knee and the calf easier in the saddle so that when you sat well in the saddle you gripped mildly with the calf and not the knees which was less tiring and looked better. The knees only came into play in an emergency. Again she held her reins a little in the old traditional manner and not with round wrists with mild contact with the horse's mouth. She appreciated my advice and I noticed that she copied when she thought I was not looking. This amused me and gave her more confidence. When I wanted her to correct her hands I pretended to look the other way.

We had long talks while riding round the Polo grounds. Nothing in particular but anything to keep us talking. But I soon found that she could go into moods, when she would become silent and keep on asking me to talk. I wasn't sure what I said most of the time, but she seemed quite satisfied with my dialogue. I talked about habits of horses. How to judge a good horse. About lucky and unlucky markings. About never to lose your temper with a horse and if you couldn't control your bad mood then the best thing was to jump off and give the horse to the syce. I remember once when I had stressed why don't you say something; and had said, 'Are you annoyed at something'. 'I am not in bad mood, I am just quiet, I like listening to you', she had said. I was encouraged by that. But she was never a great talker, and except when she got excited in poker or some other game and it was fun to watch her in that mood — so different to her normal, proper, to so relaxed, to be hilarious.

I was very keen on photography in those days and I took lots of pictures of her riding and golfing and the best one was when she was just standing and chewing grass, looking into the distance, but I wasn't sure at that and neither was she I think, but she would be far far away in her thoughts on these occasions.

We used to go to Pastanjees sometimes to buy sweets, I like peppermint. And then go to Mahattas, the Photoshop. They were all friends of mine and I used to manage to win the best picture of the week prize quite often. I have them all neatly placed in my albums in the library today. Sometimes we used to go in the dark developing room when my films were being developed and the youngest of the Mahattas used to show her how the mixture was made and in that dark room with a red light we used to peep into the trays on the table the negatives gradually developing into pictures (positives is the term really), and the joy on our faces when they were sharp and clear and then wait for Mahatta to declare the best negative.

We went to 'Suffering Moses' (corruption of the proprietor's name — Safiuddin Mussa) but going there in the city was suffering itself and the kind of things he sold were beyond our means — really good tourist stuff. But he gave good Kashmiri tea, which we enjoyed because it was also free.

It is amazing how much understanding developed in that dark room, the hands touched by accident or the heads touched in the process of watching the developing mixture during its work and turning white strips of films into pictures negatives. And then the excitement in which one got bumped and bodies met when the decision had to be taken when to take it out of the mixture plate to the fixing type plate. And then the joy on our faces when a negative of ours had been declared a winner. Then lights came on and we all blinked, smiling at one another, about what we didn't quite know but the heart felt content with the results achieved. We would then thank Mr. Mahatta the Senior and get into the car and be home before lunch. And when asked, where have you been to, the reply with that air of confidence and glee that truth gives — 'To Mahatta'. No further questions were asked. Ma knew what that meant.

One had been up early so when one had lunch early and the sun was hot outside and Ma had gone up to her room for the afternoon nap we went in the drawing room, the coolest room in the house, and just lay on the carpet with an arm as the pillow, five or six of us, or four of us or even two. of us. It was a common room. I remember once it was rather crowded and we were lying all over the place and I had gone into sound sleep when a hand touched my hand to say, 'time for tea'.

Here I was with these people in the Moon House, built by Mr. Moon, a typical middle class country house anywhere in England with tin roof and underceiling

which did not stop the noise of the rain, with grounds which were unkept with an almond grove that looked attractive from a distance, like a canopy of green supported by countless green poles. One prospect of recouping after that chicken-pox that had knocked me out for nearly 10 weeks, a few days back seemed grim but a miracle had happened, I had found a lost soul to keep my company, with two lost souls there is a hope of finding something, they might have something common somewhere, but to be lost alone is to be without hope.

I had no desire to go to Darjeeling or Ooty (Ootacamand) Simla or Mussourie to be with small people with their small ambitions with the place swarming with civil servants and army officers and their wives and brats, their precedence and their snobbery, their clubs and their suburban manners. I was aware that she was sitting next to me with her head on her knees, chewing a blade of grass, which seemed to be her habit. 'Lucky grass', I used to say sometimes and she used to smile. It seemed that she was now not very clear in her mind what she wanted. She was engaged to be married, the engagement took place three years back but nothing had materialized. Perhaps in this period she had evolved a philosophy of life for herself which she revealed to no one. Her mother had noticed that and was concerned. She spent hours, I was told, in her organized dreams, which were referred to by some as 'the sulks'. But I must admit that I had noticed none of that. And for the last few weeks she was anything but 'sulks'. I was told Ma had observed this and was happy with the change.

I began to think that she was a bit like me, wanted to be something on her own, had probably these dreams which were not dreams but plans of ways and means of how to bring this about. Whoever is going to marry me is going to be my husband, sort of thinking. I think we had become friends because at the time we were two lost souls, not quite knowing what to do and yet with ambition high, so high, that it would make it possible for one to do something for others too. But the horizon was still not clear; there were many obstacles on the way. I think we understood each other's problems so deeply and appreciated this sentiment, so that we could for hours be near each other without saying much and yet radiating sympathy.

I am not a great party man, it wasn't because I felt I was superior. I am basically a humble man but among snobs I am the biggest snob. From an early age I had been a person on my own. I did not like dancing the way it was done in our parties because it was neither here nor there, the pose was so intimate, holding each other close, and yet there was such formality, that to me it was a farce, a waste of time, a bore pushing a woman forward as if she was a baggage on wheels on a railway platform. I loved music, something that you don't have to even understand, to appreciate, and at times I felt like gliding in the air or on the floor all by myself, but convention didn't allow that. If I was fond of someone I would like to have shared music appreciation and physical expression in either some dance or some movement, any movement that would give me joy, but to do that in public, for me, would have been too vulgar. I had seen many couples dancing cheek to cheek with bodies glued to one another in public and I had often wondered what they did in private. No wonder some people thought I was an 'odd' young man, who neither smoked, nor drank, nor seemed to enjoy like other normal beings and they often wondered what I did to amuse myself. Was she thinking the same too about me? The thought flashed through my mind. I looked at her and she turned and looked at me, we were both smiling, we were both saying, "a penny for your thoughts".

She spoke first, 'what have you been thinking?' 'The same as you'. Her smile broadened. 'Do you know what the time is?' She said, 'Time is always on the move, it's never at peace.' 'They will be thinking where we are.' 'Let them think, they will

never believe when we tell them, what we have been doing — who will believe it.' 'Ma will.' I was surprised, she continued, 'she knows you pretty well I overheard her talking to kaka.' 'I wonder what she thinks' I said this more to myself than to her. 'O she was very complimentary about you — she thinks you are a very intelligent young man for your age — you are quite different to others,' she said. That was kind of nature. I thought to myself. 'Let's start going back, the sun is setting', I said. 'O let us see the sunset across the river and those green fields and the mountains in the distance go pink and — do you mind?' 'Not at all, the questions will be shot at you, not at me.' She smiled. 'Don't worry I'll manage,' she said.

We sat seeing the same sun that we see everyday and have seen from the day we were born, go down yet another different way, giving out the same colours but every time in different fashion and different combinations. 'What are you thinking?' she asked. 'O I was watching nature's changing mood, making this disc of fire go to sleep, everything in a different way, in a different country of the world.' I paused, she said nothing except, 'Go on.' 'I suppose there must be something in those heavens above, controlling the movement and behaviour of sun and moon, or clouds, or birds —' I paused she finished the sentence, 'And of us human beings on this earth.' I smiled at her. 'Why did you smile?'

'Because your short sentence beat all my long ones.' I could see her blush.

I went into myself again. How cruel all these chaps had been to portray her, in envy I am sure, as a cold blooded, ambitious calculating person. Nothing could have been farther away. She was too deep for them. Her horizons were high. Her canvas was large. I had not seen her heart from inside but it must be large.

I sprang to my feet, to shake off my flight of thought and said, 'Let's go.' We moved towards the almond grove, we came across a steep slope to go to it, she held her hand out for me to hold, either to help or seeking help, we slid down together. I let the hand go. It was quite clear to me what I would say if I was asked, simply the truth, 'we helped each other in a manner that real help is given.'

We got back with our heads high. No questions were asked by anyone. While going up to wash, under the staircase I overheard her saying to Baby, her confidant, 'Just my luck, he had to be married.'

We all had finished dinner and coffee was about to be served. I was sitting at one end of the long dinner table with Ayesha, Baby near me and Ma was at the head of the table opposite me with Kaka and the usual others on her right and left. Through the windows on the right we suddenly noticed the sky light up at a distance and soon realized that it was a fire in a village not far from us. It was Ma who said that we must go and see what has happened and what help can be given. We got into our cars and rushed there. Ma's car with Kaka and one or two others in it led the way. It took us about fifteen minutes to get there because the road was not paved and was rough and bumpy. It was dusty, and we who were following had to keep our distance to see, luckily there was a tiny moon trying to peep through the clouds. We stopped at a bridge on a nullah — small stream. One couldn't go too near the village because of the heat from the flames. The fire was intense because the mud houses had thatched roofs and as it hadn't rained for a few days the thatch was dry, something that the thirsty tongue of the flame loves licking.

Ayesha, Baby and I stood on the bridge watching the poor people trying to save their meagre belongings. They were shouting and yelling in their Kashmiri dialect, I wouldn't call it a language. Something that I could understand but little, which is sometimes very dangerous. Ayesha was standing close to me, her shoulder and mine touching and I could feel the tremor of it. Her face was lit by the fire and she

had an expression which is as fresh to me today as I write these lines as it was 50 years ago. An expression impossible to describe even on a pretty sensitive face like hers. Her eyes were wide open and looked larger than normal and I noticed a reflection of moisture in it. She leaned against me and held my hand as if she needed support and asked in a husky voice, 'What are they saying?' I am not sure but the woman is wailing because her grain stock has been destroyed. We stood there watching for quite sometime, not saying a word. I wanted to go forward to see the damage done but she held me back, 'there is nothing you can do at this time — it's all gone, let's go,' she moved still holding on to my hand. 'I must come tomorrow to see what help is needed.' I said. We got to the car and she sat with me and I sat on the steps, leading into the house. We sat on a side so as not to block the passage, I leaning on the next stone step on the back and she in her usual manner, her elbows resting on her knees pulled up and her head resting in her hands. To break the silence I spoke, 'Look at the moon playing hide and seek in the clouds.' She spoke in her usual but firm and slow way, 'Yes isn't it. Those poor wretched people were playing their hide and seek, they must have lost everything.' 'They are lucky people in a way, they didn't have much to lose.' 'May I come with you when you go to them tomorrow?' She said, 'Certainly I'll pick you up after breakfast.' I made to move, she also moved reluctantly. We went up the steps holding hands, her left my right. That handshake I think clinched a friendship that has lasted half a century.

And in that period the greatest war has been fought, in which atom bombs were dropped. Separation in the sub-continent has taken place which made father and sons foreigners, and two undeclared and one declared wars have taken place between her country and mine. She lost her mother and I mine. She lost her brother and I the only one I had. She is a grand-mother, I am a grandfather. She married soon after our meeting the man she had selected when she was in her teens. I married again after partition. She lost her husband in 1970, the man she loved and the man who in the end proved that he loved her as much, if not more. She must have had something in her to have kindled that deep affection in him, which was so foreign to his class of people. She lives today because she has to, but her life has gone with him. I should know that because we are still friends. Now and again she throws her head back like she used to do, to say something but nothing comes out — I know what she is trying to say. That kind of speech is far more effective.

I took my leave, while all this that I have recorded in the last paragraphs had yet to happen. But besides a handshake — a very peculiar one, one squeeze of right and left hand, nothing apparent happened. What happened was hidden, I could only feel what happened to me. But what happened to her, I still don't know. That is why perhaps we are still good friends.

We met the next day. I picked her up after breakfast. Ma knew where I was going and asked me to let her know what help was required. She said nothing else and stood at the head of the stairs watching us both get into the car and drive away. She spoke first, 'I couldn't sleep for a long time.' 'Neither could I' was all I could say. 'Ma likes you a lot, admires you a lot.' 'I love her and respect her and admire her. She is a wonderful lady. But a sad and lonely one.'

My brother had arrived for his honeymoon, with her wife, for whom he had waited so many years, because of her father's attitude. He had nearly given up hope. 'Perseverance commands success,' this is an old motto I said. She looked at me and smiled. I like what you always say, 'what is it?' and then repeated what she heard so often, 'whatever HE does, is the best for you.' 'You are learning fast,

that's dangerous,' I laughed. This was happening when we were driving to call on my brother and the new sister-in-law.

A mixed hockey side of Cooch Behar and Pataudi against the world — the 'world' being all those we could collect of Kashmiris or the tourists we knew who could play hockey. It was great excitement, something new in Kashmir — a mixed hockey game. We won, needless to say, three four or five servants who had come up with my brother were near international players, which my brother was and so was I to a certain extent. The difficulty was to keep the girls out of the way, because most of them missed the ball and hit the shins or tripped or fell and most of the time took someone nearby with them. We had a sumptuous tea and took photographs before the sun went down. I have some lovely snaps in my albums of the occasion.

We went home, had a bath and then everyone came to dinner to Moon House. Ma asked what we were going to do after dinner, we hadn't thought of it but on the spur of the moment I remember saying, not sure if I would succeed, 'we thought of going for a Shikara ride in the moonlight.' To my surprise Ma said what a good idea. I heard her whisper after Ma moved away, 'That was smart.' 'And lucky' I said.

It was a noisy trip. Some of the members of the party insisted on singing which was really crucifying. It amused her a lot but I wasn't so amused. She asked 'Why are you so grumpy?' 'I am tired,' was all I said. 'Too much company.' 'May be.' 'We are in a bad mood, look at that moon coming out of the cloud,' she said pointing to the moon. I couldn't help it, I was lying on my back supported by the huge cushions one finds in these boats — Shikaras, Shikar means game. One is supposed to find one's game here. It is an outfit for a couple or two more on the backside, but not for a bus load, which this party had become, much to the protest of the Manjhis (boat men) who were sure the boat would sink. The only advantage of it all was that one was tightly packed and if you had the right person with you, the noise and the danger of sinking was not so disturbing.

It was great fun when everyone had exhausted their singing and we all lay half dead with fatigue quite content to be left alone in our thoughts, whatever they were.

From Moon House to Shalimar where we had to go was a long pull for the oarsmen, but once they had passed the Dal Lake, their task was easy, they were going with the current of the good Jhelum river that had seen so many caravans of shikaras like this, full of youngsters (sometimes not so young either), enjoying the calm, the peace, the smoothness, the solitude of this mode of travel, going and returning to these gardens 'Nishat' (Pleasure) and 'Shalimar' built by the Moghul Emperor Jahangir.

After a quiet spell in which was absorbed all that we had seen and felt in this Shalimar garden, gay, with its dancing fountains, spraying water on those who passed by to receive them to enjoy more, of all that could be felt and not described. The Heart feels, the Eyes see, the Tongue describes and the Fingers write, but none really can compliment the other. Hence the famous couplet of Tulsi Das:

> **Sita sobha kae bukane,**
> **Mukh bin nen, nen bin bane.**
> *How can you describe the beauty of Sita*
> *The eyes that see, cannot speak, and the mouth*
> *that talks cannot see.*

I woke up from my reflective dreaming and spoke: 'Give me your hands I will read your future.' 'One or both?' 'Both, I read them together.' 'I didn't know you could do that.' 'There are lot of things you don't know about me Madam.' I said holding her hands and examining her palm. She was amused and was smiling. 'Palm reading to a soldier astronomer is like map reading. A good map reader can picture the terrain clearly, where the high ground is, where the ravines are, the gradients and so on. I can read your hands clearly. I can read what's written so clearly.' She laughed, 'You are pulling my leg.' 'I haven't done any exercise like that yet.' 'O I didn't mean that, you know?' 'I know yet I don't. You now listen to what is written in poetic form on your hands, I am quite serious. I am very psychic, I can read pages after pages and don't have to close my eyes either.' 'You are joking,' she said pulling away her hands. 'Now keep still and let me concentrate,' and I was concentrating — I was composing what I was feeling from the hands. I held them together and she became serious. I started my reading —

You will get what you want,
But there is no limit to want.
Eventually, you will get your wealth,
But at the expense of real wealth.
You will live long — very long life,
Still trying to find — what's real life.
You won't have everything, in life, you wanted,
There is no Life, unless you want, or are wanted.

I stopped. I saw an expression on her face I had never seen before. She had become serious. I let her hands go. She looked at the palms as if trying to read the writing herself. Then she said, 'How did you do it?' 'I don't know.' 'It happens to me sometimes,' 'often?' 'No — but the man who told me the fundamentals of this said I had this gift and could develop it to a high pitch if I cared to, but the extent of reading was dependent on the response between the individual and yourself. The basic lines don't change but all the others are on the change the whole time he told me.' I paused. She spoke, 'Which means we can change our intermediary lines?' 'So I was told.' 'What else did he tell you? Who was he?' 'It's a long story but I'll try and make it short. I had just returned from Sandhurst to Pataudi. It was August, mid August, the rains had started. And the Nuddi that comes from Alwar side every year was flowing like a river close to the garden house where I was staying. A young man in his early twenties had come with his elder brother who had been my teacher when I was at the Aitchison College, Lahore. They came, to congratulate me on my return. One day Maulvi Sahib (we call him that — the teacher) said, 'Why don't you show your palm to my brother — he is gifted in this science.' I was a bit wary because with will-power, auto-suggestion can produce events. But to please the Maulvi Sahib and to have a guess at what was in immediate store for me I agreed. And put my hands out to this short, slim, rather accurate, young man with a clipped beard. He was the opposite of his brother who was six feet three, very fair and a very handsome man also with a clipped beard. He examined carefully, wrote a few notes in a copy book, with ruled lines, I remember and then said, 'Thank you.' Never said a word to me and left. I was surprised but Maulvi Sahib explained that he would work out something and give it to me. The next day he gave me two pages of foolscape ruled paper with his forecasts on it. It said a lot of things but what struck me was that he said what had already been said in my original horoscope prepared by the Pundits when I was born and as a result of which my name was altered from Yousaf Ali to the present

one — Sher Ali. That I would have no father or grandfather. That I had a guardian's hand over me. That whoever tried to harm me would come to harm. That whoever tried to disgrace me would be disgraced etc. But the new part was that in later years of my life I would have some part in some religious movement which would have a sufi approach. And then he also made a prediction on my age and the kind of day I would die on. The day would be a holiday and the life would be a long one.' She had listened attentively throughout. "Don't talk of death — please." "The only thing definite my dear." I had said. She just put a finger on my lips and said 'please.'

This business of having psychic powers or gift, as I grew I would feel the 'presence' more. It was quite frightening for me. I was hardly 20 then. He gave me the paper written in his hand in dark blue ink with his fountain pen. I remember all that. I put all this in my diary and carefully put the paper away. And he said that there would be a war in which I would do well and come out of it without a scratch. I remember that expression. This put her in a mood of contemplation.

I am going back decades and relating this dialogue as near as possible from diaries to try and bring out the kind of a person Ayesha was then and I do think that basically she has not changed. She is still quite capable of throwing her head back and doing exactly as she feels. But she has aged which bring its own restraints. She has suffered which has also left its mark and some of it is visible. But how anyone who was at the age of twenty what I have tried to portray earlier could be labelled cold and calculating is beyond my comprehension. Giving her such an image is I think simply malicious. Would a person like that take to active politics the way she did solely for the desire of serving the 'cause of the poor'. She broke the traditions of the House of Amber and Jaipur and joined the Opposition, when their 'Red Book' clearly stated that they must always be close in support of anyone who rules in Delhi. Her husband's hope was that she would join the Congress and was surprised when she joined the Satwantra Party — because of Rajaji (Rajagopalachari), probably the best statesman produced by India up to now, who was advising Congress to accept the Muslim League demand of a separate home if that is what the Muslim majority really wanted. Credit must go to her husband that he stood by her and supported her to the hilt. He even spoke in the very first public meeting in Jaipur. He certainly loved and cared for her, for I knew that he disliked politics and politicians. I think all that had to do with his deteriorating health at the pace it did — nothing kills quicker than frustration or a job in which you are not happy and cannot for some reason get out of. And I think this was one of those jobs.

But now I am talking of events that haven't happened yet. All this comes much later, but it is just as well to see the kind of person she was from the very beginning, warm hearted with a feeling and concern for others, especially for the needy. She did not marry for money. Though she knew what it could do or undo. She was not exactly a pauper herself. Glamour and all that is understandable. One thing I must record here even though it may be ahead of time but then hindsight in writing is on occasions understandable and admissible — she has proved that she makes a good friend. She has never allowed her strings and cords and even threads of friendship to break.

Now where was I yes, in Shalimar Gardens. There was no time to explain the history of those who built it? And why? The setting itself explains every thing.

Because we had a rendezvous with others and there would be no Shikara to take us back. So we rushed to the gate to find that one was waiting for us, left by the party. There was hardly any conversation on the way back because we were both quite exhausted after walks in that beautiful garden and climbing up-and-

down in-and-out of those pavilions with fountains playing — what a lovely expression and they do play a music of their own, not just sprout out furiously out of some holes under some pressure from somewhere — they sound like music, nothing constant but all dependent on who is listening, and in what mood.

After a while I had managed to collect some lotus flowers and piled them to give to Ma — not a peace offering but as appreciation of love that I had for that lady, who valued and appreciated all good things in life and hated vulgarity. I started humming some poetry. She asked, 'What are you humming?' 'O, nothing — you wouldn't understand.' 'Now you are being rude', 'No not at all — all right, I will relate:

"I will never forget that yawning stretch of yours,
Like beauty itself taking off to its source.
And then you stopped short — having raised your hands,
When you saw me looking, smiled and dropped your hands."

Did you compose this?' 'Unfortunately not, but the translation is mine.' 'I wish I knew Urdu better.' 'It's a very expressive language, being a mixture of so many, you have lot of words to choose from, like lot of strings to play on. It is just ideas and a play of words.' 'So simple and so difficult.' 'Really simple things are difficult to understand, like life itself. Like Truth.' She kept quiet; she was thinking. Then she spoke, 'I told them that you composed poetry and they said but one hasn't seen it or heard it.' I interrupted, 'Poetry is composed in the head, not in trousers.' She roared with laughter. When she laughed she really laughed.

I remember getting a letter from her from jail in which she had said that she longed to throw her head back and laugh, I am again jumping my fences when they are not there but I must record as I go along what kind of a person she was when I met her and got to know her. People were surprised when she joined politics. I wasn't. She has a restless soul. She is deep, but not always. And these combinations produce contradictions which people who do not know her, or do not want to know her, do not understand, and attribute to her designs that never even entered her head. I met her the other day in Jaipur. Saw quite a bit of her. Basically she is the same. But suddenly she becomes aware of her surroundings and stops short of what she was going to express or even do — like a horse, well trained, well bred, will come suddenly to a halt in front of an obstacle, not having seen it before.

The next day we had gone to Gulmerg. The drive back was a quiet one. Everyone was exhausted after the long trip. (We to Gulmerg and they to some ancient shrine in the valley that Ma wanted to see). It had been a hot day. And Ma, unfortunately had asked some people to dinner whom she had met some days back on the Bund who claimed that they had met in France years back. Ma being what she was a generous hearted person with perfect manners had asked them to a meal and forgot that it was to be a dinner tonight.

But conversation was necessary whether we had anything to say or not. Chatter had become necessary like salt and pepper.

Jaffar, the Abdar (Butler), went to Ma, on my instructions bent low and said, 'Your Highness, the doctor is waiting....' It was said in Bengali and fortunately the doctor in it is also doktour and Jaffar had put the stress on the doctor part. Ma who was used to this kind of whispers from Jaffar on critical occasions, looked at me and smiled and then told Jaffar in Bengali, 'Tell the doctor I won't be long' — then made certain that the guests knew what was going on and apologized for these slips into another language, which she hoped they didn't understand. The

result was quick, the guests apologized for staying too long and Ma, the perfect-mannered lady as she was apologized for breaking off such an interesting conversation. When the guests were gone, she turned to me, 'Thank you Sher...' and smilingly started climbing up the steps, to her bedroom.

We were all exhausted and so waved farewell and went to our destination. The next day she and I went to Tungmerg on Ma's instructions to select a site for a Party.

In spite of being tried I remember tossing on my bed, thinking of the drive to my Tennenberg, the 'reconnaissance' there and then the drive back. Ma had sent Phoni Babu with us, to note down the requirements of the Birthday Party. But also to keep an eye on us. He was known as the 'spy'. But he did not bother us at all and was busy asking questions about crockery and cutlery which the Dak Bungalow possessed. We had managed to find some lovely spots and eventually selected one near the stream. There was a big ground in the area where games could be organized and enough Pine trees for hide and seek or even sardines. We had quite by accident jumped into a huge hollow tree which we kept as a secret hiding place for ourselves.

I was trying to sleep but the more I tried the more awake I became. And having a fertile mind it was producing thoughts that kept sleep away, which with me always requires a bit of privacy and that quietness of mind which can be a defence in the thickest of battles. I only could think of what one could call the Tungmerg Party. Ma allowed us to go to this lovely spot by ourselves and wander about in that paradise on earth. All by ourselves, with not even a single soul to look after us, in the Pine trees in which we were seated. Our only intruder was a four year old child from the hamlet close by who was sent to collect bits of wood that drop off from these fragile swaying trees, to produce fuel for the poor to cook their meagre meals.

Tungmerg, reminded me, a student of military history, of Tennenberg, where Hindenberg destroyed the Russian Army in the First World War, not realizing what forces he had let loose, in Russia, by that Episode; produced a revolution and gave a chance to a man like Lenin, to give practical form of the theories of Engles and Marx and others. My Tanmerg Episode, changed my life, I at last knew what to do and what not to do. I was not a lost soul after that. What it did to her only she knows, but her actions after that party were similar to mine — 'either I get what I want, or I will do something else.' After that decision she ceased to be a lost soul. She now knew what to do.

Tungmerg, the camping ground next to the Dak Bungalow where we played games — snakes and ladders, the huge hollow tree in which we hid and the stream with its ice cold water coming down from the hills of Gulmerg on the banks of which the Birthday Cake was cut — Ayesha's Birthday on the 23rd May, held on 18th May, because I was leaving the next day.

As later events proved that my assessment then lying in my bed, affecting and reflecting, in the hope of getting and then catching and then keeping for good, the right reflection, in the store at the back of my mind, was right. She was married to the man she wanted, exactly a year after the 'Tungmerg Episode'.

After that there was no wandering of thoughts, on the part of both, I think. The path was clear, if that didn't reach, then the other one would. But the destination was not clear to me. I now knew how to get out of the wood, but what would happen after that, I wasn't sure.

But I must go back half a century again. After that there was no thinking and seeing her in my imagination, like all in that state of mind do — clear and good-looking, vivacious in flashes, gentle and intelligent, good-humoured and fading out

of focus, now and again, like a dream. She was no longer bored. But allowing for imagination, which is sometimes so far from reality, she had become more tempting, more mysterious and more exciting. Perhaps she realized for the first time that she had made him so great a person of spirit as well as of body, in her day-dreams, that no other person could compare with him, that it wasn't true.

My diary records that on that date I went to sleep with no cobwebs to remove and had a good night sleep which is the best thing for an activated mind. 'Sleep... balm of hurt minds, nature's second course chief nourisher in life's feast.' This is Shakespeare, but here Momin would be relevant too:

> **'Rose milnai pe nahin nisbate ulfat moqoof,**
> **Umar bhar ek mulaqat chali jati hay.**
> *Links of affection depend not on daily meeting,*
> *All the life goes on —just on one meeting.* (S. A.)

Ayesha is not an easy person to understand. I have known her now for over half a century but I cannot say that I know her fully. But then of course, anyone worth knowing can never really be understood fully. She is basically a shy person. She is magnetic in every sense of the word, and that combined with her beautiful face and shyness with quietness, is a devastating combination. You can look at her, and admire her but you will find it very difficult to fathom her, even if she is in high spirits because she is capable of changing her mood like a flash. She is not moody. She has always liked to be on her own. She stress that in her book too. She says also that she was casual. She is casual to look at even now, but is anything but casual when it means accomplishing any task. Any beautiful woman, who is unconscious of her beauty and on top of that is casual, is — a killer. She is generous at heart, but tight in affairs of worldly business. She does not mix the two. She can also be wise.

She has a big heart which in affection is kind and forgiving. She doesn't make friends easily but when she makes them, she keeps them; a rare and noble gift. She can be volatile, but by nature she is not. She can get 'furious' when she is agitated, which is not often, but soon 'fury' fades and she being forgiving, forgets. She is sensitive, though she doesn't show it. Her important remarks, that mean much to her, have often been passed in a casual, by the way, manner. She seldom talks to a friend in a hurry, in a gathering. She is apt to get bored with things and even company soon now. She is trying to find peace within through yoga. I hope she finds it soon.

She has been alone from the very beginning as she says in her book and that 'alone' instinct has been consistent throughout her life. She has never been a great party goer, this may surprise a number of people, she went to parties because she had to. She is very duty conscious. After her husband's death, she is always on the move, restless, because she is not sure where her destiny lies. One hopes that she will soon get over this restlessness and settle down to that state of contentment of mind, which is the greatest blessing of the Being.

She loves Jaipur, its hills, with the forts on top, trying hard to guard the traditions of this city, founded by the great astronomer, one of its Rajas, Jai Singh the second, who founded this geometrical city in early 18th century, where practically everything is at right angles. You can take a bearing from the Genesh Temple on top, between Jaigarh and Nahargarh forts, on top of the Geytor tangi (valley) where the rulers are buried from Jai Singh II onwards to the central gate of the City Palace, and then to the statue of the founder himself. One will find that it makes a straight line, hardly a degree or two's difference. But with the mass of

humanity that has invaded this once beautiful city this aspect is hardly noticeable or appreciated now.

The once famous pink city, is I am afraid today, a stink city and every pink wall is now covered with black Hindi writing, which I cannot read, but looks as though huge black flies have got stuck to the walls from sheer exhaustion. Partition has brought an influx of 'outsiders' from all over, but particularly from Sindh, in Pakistan. But there are Punjabis and others too. After becoming the capital of Rajasthan, one sees more 'outsiders' than the old inhabitants of old romantic Jaipur. Hideous house building schemes have come up to spoil the country-side and the landscape. I am afraid, this once beautiful city, in the middle of a huge valley, is now a jungle of houses. And to see the old buildings that are left one has to risk one's life to see them on foot or in a rickshaw.

Ayesha does not like this kind of Jaipur. She had protested against this defaming and pollution of her Jaipur, to the authorities, from the day the Congress Government took over. She wrote to the Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, who agreed with her and sympathized with her, and wrote to the authorities concerned, but nothing happened. India is too big and too crowded to be controlled effectively from Delhi now. It is the real big shots (who not long ago were not even small shots) who matter. They want votes in the ballot boxes. In the open, uncontrolled battle between 'haves' and 'have-nots' the battle is won or lost from the very start — it is the have-nots that will always win. Even the days of the ablest have gone. It is the Biradari that counts now. The old 'untouchables', whom Mrs. Gandhi called Harijans, children of God, are in the ascendance. They cannot now be called 'untouchables', 'Kameens' (degraded) they are now the 'weaker-society'. Lands are distributed to them taken from the old out-dated privileged society. This is not considered 'corruption' but is called "correction" of the old misdeeds, of accidents of birth, in a caste-ridden society of Hinduism. You got the identification of birth, you couldn't change it, unless of course by a miracle became a man of money and bought yourself a camouflaged class. But such cases have been few up to now. Mr. Ambedkar, the man who wrote the Indian Constitution, had come up from untouchability to touchability, in the days of the British Raj, who 'loved supporting the under-dog', in their strategy of divide and rule (I do ask my British friends to forgive me for this 'cut' but I wish they had made more cuts in the caste-ridden society when they were in power, like they abolished Suttee). This poor man, Mr. Ambedkar, after independence, to remain touchable, had to embrace Buddhism; I suppose he couldn't risk joining the real casteless society, Islam.

Ayesha loves her Jaipur, being what she is, a bit of a dreamer, it was the name Jaipur, with all its romantic history, built round the hungry Rajput Kachwaha warriors, who had come into prominence by offering their daughter to Akbar, who had taken with her, her young nephew, by the name of Man Singh. Akbar was attracted by this youngster's intelligence and smart bearing, whom he kept near him and trained him to be his most trusted personal guard and later his most trusted general. It is this man, who later had the distinction of being titled Mirza, by virtue of which he became a kin of the royal family. He became famous, as Mirza Man Singh in history. He is the man who started the construction of the Fort now known as Jaigarh, but it was Jai Singh, one of his successors, who finally finished the construction of the fort. This fort was started to house his wealth which he was collecting fast, as the favourite of Akbar, who had made him the master of 27 Parganas (fiefs), besides the high command of troops and generalship. This fort became famous recently when it was searched from one end to the others, in search of the gold that was supposed to be stored in its treasury.

Ayesha was also attracted to a Man Singh but 300 years later to Man Singh Second. Of all the Rajputana States it was the most known outside India, because of its young ruler who with his Polo team had made a name for himself and his state in the heart of the then British Raj, England. The English are sportsmen and they admire a good sportsman.

A Name plays an important part in one's personality and eventually on characters as well. We are told that she was named this way because Ma was reading Rider Haggards book 'She' when she was born in a London nursing home. I maintain that Ma was not ignorant about the background to this historical name. In fact she told me this herself in Srinagar in the summer of 1939 one day in a conversation at Moon House. We were talking of Islamic history, in which Ma was, to my surprise, very knowledgeable and asked me some pertinent questions — on marriage laws and rights of women etc. She was comparing them with Hindu Laws, in which a Hindu woman had far less rights, in fact, is a chattel after her husband's death. When she became a widow, she virtually became an outcst. She could never re-marry and there was no such thing as divorce in Hindu Law in those days. They have been changed through customary law, very recently. No wonder in the old days she preferred to die with the man with whom she could not break her physical bonds in life, even after he had gone.

Her approach to religion was very liberal. She was very broad-minded and most of her friends whom I know were Muslims. Most of the servants around her I found were also Muslims.

Ma was a wonderful person. I haven't met anyone equal even to her, yet. A queen, full of humour, but with such grace. I wish she was alive and I sat at her feet, to listen to all the incidents of her full life, from her own lips, rolling off with much wit and grace. I missed Ma — like I am now missing my mother. She was most kind to me. I can never forget her kindness. The Quran says, 'There is no return for kindness but kindness.' This book, in its humble manner, could never be the return of her kindness.

When studying the life of Ayesha I find that Ma has been her 'target' to achieve her aim. She did not have the background of Ma, because she was not the daughter of the Gaekwar of Baroda, not the only daughter even of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar. She always had a mild complex about Ma. All children except Ila, the eldest daughter and Inderjeet the No. 2 boy, were a bit scared of Ma. Both the two I have mentioned above were 'wild' by temperament. Bhaiya was too much of a gentleman and always kept his distance from his mother, though he could convey his independent opinion through his Private Secretary Kaju Mama (Mama — maternal uncle). This gentleman came from the Jubbal royal family, a small state in Himachel Pradesh.

Ayesha was the enigma, entangled in her own thoughts, even from childhood, quite happy in her own company and sometimes more relaxed with strangers than in her own crowd, probably uneasy about her thoughts being away. I found that Ma treated her, slightly differently than others. I think she was aware that she was a bit of herself. And had to be handled with care.

As I have said earlier that I first met Ma and Bhaiya (Maharaja Jagadipendra Narayan) of Cooch Behar in Dachet, in Berkshire, England, in 1931, when I was at Sandhurst. When I was taking leave to go back to Sandhurst and on her suggestion Bhaiya was to drop me and I had said with a bow, 'Your Highness', she had not only given me her most captivating smile but was gracious enough to say, "My children call me Ma, I would be very happy if you did the same." I backed out of the doorway, without turning my back on her, and the only thing I could gurgle out of my throat was 'Thank you', I was about to say Your Highness, then I

checked myself and managed to say, 'Ma.' She smiled and nodded her head with folded hands. This is the first time I addressed her as Ma to her face. And from that moment in 1931 I looked upon her as a mother. She had completely captivated my heart and I kept comparing her to my mother from that day. Two entirely different people and yet they had something so much in common. Even today, they are difficult to describe when both have gone and left me alone. Both had an overpowering personality. Both were very independent-minded and both became widows at an early age — my mother at 24 and Ma at 30. My mother was in Purdah and yet held court, as the Supreme Judicial Authority during her Regency period, from behind a chik (bamboo curtain).

Ma's father and mother, an outstanding couple, was replaced by not so outstanding couples. Sayajirao-III's distress had been that all his sons died in his lifetime. He often remarked to his close friends 'What have I done that God should punish me so severely that all my sons have indulged in things that I detested and died as a result so early in life.' He was succeeded by his grandson who again was no match to his grandfather and erred by falling in love desperately with an already married lady with children from a noble Hindu of South Indian Madrasi family — Pitapurams. I had the pleasure of meeting her but cannot claim that I knew her well. She was the elder sister of Kamula who married Inderjit, the younger brother of Bhaiya Cooch Behar. I attended the wedding in Madras.

Some could ask, who knew the customs of the past, how could Sita (Sita Devi) the name of the lady with whom the Maharaja literally fell in love, marry, when they were both married. The answer is simple she became a Muslim, which automatically dissolved the Hindu marriage and after a brief, a very brief, spell became a Hindu again and married her catch, in style, to become the second Maharani of Baroda. In the East we have an apt saying —*Jisay Pia Chahe woh hi Rani Kehlai* — the Rani is the one that the husband likes. In the East the wives, sometimes, could run into many.

This lady, known to some as 'Blecky' but to some of us in India the 'Dark Beauty', was an exceptional person, only one of that pattern or category, could have done what she did. She had a chiselled face and an equally chiselled body, in spite of three children. She was a beauty by any standards. And had the right skin and colour to show off her Baroda diamonds and pearls. To establish her control she soon blessed her husband with a son, Sayajirao Partab Singh Gaekwar, who when he grew became known as 'Princey' in European circles. Unfortunately he also died early on 8 May 1985 but not a natural death. He was found at Cagnes-sure-Mar in Southern France with his throat cut at a villa called 'I Love You'. Police suggested suicide, but investigation suggested possibility of a homosexual murder or drug trafficking.

Today the great Sayajirao's successor is Fatehsinghjirao the son of Partabsinghjirao, who was removed from the Gaddi by the Paramount Power, when for some reason, he challenged the validity of the Constitution. He was succeeded by his only son Fatehsinghjirao. He has no heir. But there are no states or rulers either. So the vast property of the Barodas would come under the hammer after him. But he is able enough to see and ensure that the noble name of Baroda survives second to none, by careful planning so that the family does not drag the Baroda's name in courts of law. I think he is aware of an old saying of his land — of the three Z's, that can cause enmity of the extreme nature between even father and son and brothers — 3Zs, Zun (woman), Zar (money) and Zamin (land).

Ma was gifted with a remarkable brain, charm and beauty which made her the centre and focus in any gathering or assembly. She had inherited the good points of both her father and mother. Her father the Gaekwar of Baroda — Sayajirao was

a remarkable man and the one I admired a great deal. From a humble peasant boy, though of high breeding, at the age of 12 by an accident of adoption, he had ascended the Gaddi of Baroda. He was a kind person to whom a sense of deficiency gave the determination to make good. He was a lonely man because of circumstances throughout his life. He was never allowed to forget that he was the Maharaja and no longer Gopal Rao of the little village of Kavelana, when in early May 1875 a police officer had appeared and he was taken to Baroda.

His Highness was a great traveller and his ill-health was a good excuse to visit various places where good springs existed with pleasant pastures in which he could dip and roam about. He was always accompanied by wife — Baroma. 'Her Highness Chimna Dev II. She was a second wife, the first one having died in child birth of her last child. She left a girl and a boy.

Ma's father and mother were very exceptional people. So progressive in their state of Baroda that the Paramount Power showed touches of jealousy.

The Gaekwar's policy of free and compulsory education is placed after 'the affairs' and included a European Civilian who was the Minister. In important matters the opinion of the Resident predominated. To be fair to Indian Princes, it must be said that they were expected to protect the British Government from all seditious writers when they themselves were exposed by the British Government to the vile attack of every slandering blackmailer. But as soon as His Highness the Gaekwar returned from Europe he took steps to amend the laws, and was all the more anxious to do so because of Lord Minto's just and statesmanlike action in making the Native States truly 'protected' against insolent and audacious liberals. Lord Curzon's policy estranged the affections, if not the loyalty, of Indian Princes, but Lord Minto altered all this. Whatever the loyal and proud and chivalrous Rajputs may have thought of the Gaekwar's conduct at the Durbar (we feel sure) they thought far worse of the conduct of the author of the letters, specially if he happens to be one whom they may dread as future infliction, who received the British VIP's bare-footed, and said Hukam (means order, here meaning Yes Sir) even before they had hardly uttered the words.

Ma of course threw away Purdah, the moment she left Baroda. Not only that, she is the one who set the present style of wearing Sarees, in the graceful manner that is seen worn today. It is really a south Indian women's dress and was tucked at the back, passing in between the legs, to give more security and practicability, with ladies of nobility it trailed as a train behind after passing through the legs. The Parsees wore Sarees but rather tightly, as if in shrouds. And to secure further with belts in the fold. It is Ma who gave the flow over the shoulder. Ayesha, I am afraid, doesn't wear her Saree half as well as her mother.

Ayesha, instinctively and yet quite unknowingly tried to copy her mother, all her life. I wish she had done the same, with regard to her handling of politics as well. Ma detested politics, specially after Partition, her mother had politics in her blood. Ayesha I think, got a bit of her maternl grand-mother's blood, for politics. Her mother advised her against entering the arena of politics, but it seems that after Partition and the disappearance of states, the glamour of the Palaces and Parades and Parties and even Polo faded away a bit. She got bored with the routine. Her revolutionary stubbornness, and her fight against the falling standard of society and a complete change in the attitude of the people, like animals from cages let loose, urged her to do something. But was that something to be? Now nothing could be done without politics and politicians, the Power lay there and no longer in palaces. Something inside, was agitating her that she could not just watch and do nothing. Somewhere in the background was her burning ambition to become somebody in her own right as well and not just the Maharani of Jaipur — a third

one at that. And politics was beckoning her with open arms. But I must stop here. I am going too fast about life.

Before she reached this stage she passed through many others. She travelled in many Coaches and she passed many milestones. And because of that she rubbed shoulders with many people, from a girl, she became a woman. She changed her identity at the age of 21 — from a Princess of Cooch Behar, she became the Maharani of Jaipur — No. 3 admittedly, but Maharani all the same. She became the favourite one. There is an old saying —***Jisay Pia chahe woh hi Rani kehlai.***(the Rani is the one that the husband likes). To the world she was the Maharani of Jaipur, the one they saw, loved and admired.

The other two may have been senior with two children each, but had been passed over and eventually went into oblivion in the corridors of the Palaces. No. 1 hardly lived in Jaipur after this incident and preferred to live in her old surroundings, palaces of her father and brother in Jodhpur, who succeeded him, my friend Maharaja Umaed Singh. And the second one drank herself to death. They could never have believed that a person like her — with a background like her, both the grandmothers of outstanding personalities and enlightened persons, leave alone her own mother, who was an exceptional personality in every field especially in progressive social approaches — had agreed to become a number three. Love can be blind. But a number of people did not put the ecstasy of blindness of love alone but attributed it to that burning ambition which can make one accept anything for a while, in the pursuance of a higher aim.

It is a long way before she enters the battlefield of politics and tastes her victories and her 'Retreat' from Delhi. This could be compared, from a soldier's eyes, as Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Both survived but just for a while. Her 'Waterloo' was not fought on a battlefield or on the political field, it happened on the Polo ground of Cirencester where, on the 24th of June 1970, where her power base, her devoted husband, who had married her against such opposition from his clan, passed away from this world to the world yet to be found and experienced, without saying even good-bye to her. Jaipur has now become her St. Helena.

Ayesha had a typical Hindi name, Gayetri — meaning light. Gayetri Devi is her official name but friends still call her Ayesha. This was done because some Princes told Ma that some Muslims might object — but no one has done up to now.

This difference from others' attitude of mind was common. I found in all their Highnesses, and was to be the main cause of their going into oblivion without a sound or even a sigh. This lack of unity, encouraged earlier by the British, for valid reasons of 'divide and rule', could not be recovered when they tried to do it much later by forming the Chamber of Princes and played with the idea of Princestan as the third unit of the Triangular Confederation of Independent Dominions of Hindustan, Pakistan and Princestan. 'Unity is strength' is an old saying which was very much lacking amongst the princes. But we were talking of titles and got swept into the bigger pasture of the Princely Order.

For Ayesha to be in love with Jai was like an illness. She wasn't certain when it begun. It had come without much awareness, without symptoms, unless one could call symptoms the joking that had gone one between them from the very beginning, more from him than from her. For a long time he was His Highness to her. In a way it happened the moment she saw him years ago when once he had walked in with Ma *. Woodland after Polo for the IPA (Indian Polo Association) Cup tournament during the Christmas week in Calcutta. She always remembered him as he arrived in his convertible Rolls. He looked so young and vigorous in his Polo boots and breeches which carried the marks of tussle with others and his blazer with a light blue scarf. He had greeted her with a friendly grin. He did not have a chis-

elled face, but he was Maharaja and came from Rajputana and on top of that from Jaipur. He was not a volatile faintly mongolized Bengali or a war-like Marhatta looking like a muscular little terrier. From that day, she had fallen in love, not so much perhaps with the man himself, but with the idea of him.

And then as association increased, through Ma and sometimes through Bhaiya, she found him child-like, amusing sometimes and his big muscular hands were not a deterrent but something attractive, for it was with these hands that he handled his Polo stick so delicately and proficiently. She found herself watching all his moments attentively when he was talking to others. He was a manly man and an attractive man. And then the awful thought used to flash her mind. 'Then he must be attractive to other women too', and frightened by that was the fact that he was married, with two wives of four children, 'just my luck' she found herself saying to herself. She found that when she thought of him in this manner she became depressed and moody. This was getting more and more noticeable to her sisters and they started teasing her about it. But all of a sudden she also found herself resolving that she must pursue her aim, her line and this move combined with her burning ambition used to again bring that feeling of hope, that keeps one going in one's endeavours, even though the task may seem impossible. He had become part of her soul as time went on and therefore it had to happen — but what from it would take she was not so sure. Anyway it was good fun to have a man in thought instead of just blank or movement of ideas and clouds in an empty sky, an empty mind.

Before she had never thought of men as men because her life had been so full, of what, she wasn't sure, but that didn't matter, as long as he was in her thoughts now. But what about him — did he love her or did he care for her, or did he even think of her when she was not present? These thoughts were disturbing, but she put them aside and went back into her circle of fancy again. She must have thought herself to be out of the ordinary because she had not allowed herself to get interested in anybody else or rather through some time that no one had made even the slightest move to interest because they considered her beyond their reach, as she sometimes thought about him — a thought she drove out the moment it entered her mind. 'Nothing is out of reach if one tries hard enough to get it,' she had read somewhere and ambitious nature was always goading her towards its fulfilment.

She had overheard a conversation once that she was not a Rajputani and both No. 1 and No. 2 wives were from Jodhpur, from the same House, in fact they were aunt and niece; both daughters of the Ruler. But what did that matter, her own mother had married out of her caste, her father was not a Marhatta. It would be an awful scandal and there would be terrible opposition to it, she thought of that sometimes, but it couldn't be more than her mother's who had broken her engagement with Scindia, a great Marhatta prince, to marry her father who was not even a small Maharaja when her mother married him, but a mere number two of a state — 'be a dog but not a younger brother!' But things had worked out all right, the elder brother died soon without an issue and her father became the Maharaja. In any case all such scandals had their own glamour — 'I would be scandalized with him' was a good thought. That was bound to have some effect on him, her mind had worked out all these angles, to put her in the mood which made her brood by herself sometimes. This had taught her the habit of being alone and as time went on she developed these habits more. This worried her mother a bit and sometimes she received a rebuke or two and was told to be sensible and come out of her world of clouds. This of course drove her more into herself.

It was not till they went to Jaipur in 1932 that she was 'booked' by Jai, to be his No. 3 wife, when she had grown, she was then thirteen. Her mother had told him,

"I never heard such sentimental rubbish!" She was very pleased with this 'booking' but couldn't get herself to believing that her dreams were slowly beginning to take some real form.

This approach, both of Jai and her is very interesing. His was a very matter of fact approach. To him marriage was a necessity and to produce children a duty, to the State and to the House. So to him one more made no difference, especially when she could ride well and keep him company in his sport and outdoor life, riding, shooting, hunting and attending all the functions connected with this kind of life. Admittedly he already had two wives and children from them but to him that meant nothing, his father, who had adopted him, the late Maharaja had dozens, but had not been able to produce a male heir from the Maharani. So from Jai's point of view she suited him admirably. An attractive modern princess with a most attractive family, well connected and with the kind of upbringing that he wanted — modern, European, and yet belonging to the same fraternity. His asking to marry her in the car while driving and she sitting by his side and in the manner he did it, is a clear example of his intentions and approach on the matter — to her a vital one, to him just another one. Going around in the car in Hyde Park, without any pretence and preliminaries and quite a matter of course, he had said, 'You know, I told Ma long ago that I would like to marry you when you were grown up.' "Will you?"

Her reaction was honest enough — she came out with 'yes' — straightaway.

He by asking that there was still plenty of time was not only giving her time to think but also allowing himself plenty of time to prepare to remove the hurdles, that it was obvious, which he would have to face when he made this decision public and got the clearance from the Clan; or from the Rao of the Clan — Rana of Udaipur.

The approach of these two people is so different on this vital issue, to most, that it is fascinating as well as unbelievable. Hers was a personal and spontaneous fall, his was carefully calculated and considered approach, of another wife who could be with him outside, where he liked to live and in the kind of society he liked to live in, very westernized and very broad minded and gay in its approaches.

I have written at length about Rajmata Jaipur because I feel that she is the one person who can give a lead to this yet another 'minority' of India, the princely commoners, who are still not common, to be petty and bigoted, to give a healthy lead and guidance to the people of their areas; one third of old India and their 100 million people where they looked upon their subjects as equals and had no complexes about creeds, castes and colours. She stands out as one person in the 'class' as the most suitable because she has charisma. She stands out as one person in this 'class' at the most suitable because she has really been through the mill. She has been behind bars... as well, proving her courage of conviction and demonstrating that she was made of a metal that can be at ease in a palace and in a prison, because it is all a matter of mental adjustments and determination.

I have written about her, as much as I could, for the reader to judge of what kind of a person she is today and how she arrived at this stage of maturity and development — a shy, rather an interesting girl with a fanciful mind bursting with ambition — to do something. She created a prince charming for herself, she made herself fall in love with him, in spite of the circumstances; she agreed to be the third wife. She swallowed a lot of humiliation, she made a lot of adjustments, to achieve what she wanted — that something of which she is still not so sure. She was sure of one thing that through her love, through her man, was the only way to get about achieving what she so desired, power and public applause.

Her career has been an interesting study, I have been fortunate and privileged enough to study it from very close quarters. There is a streak of determination, to the point of stubbornness that is a constant factor in her make-up to me. From the time when I got to know her, there has never been any doubt about her aims, I use the word in the plural form because her life up to now has proved that she had not had just one Aim, she has gone from aim to aim. It demonstrates the depth of her make-up and what more, the variety of her character. She is one of those rare beings who can be a friend, a wife, a companion and yet retain that aloofness to be able to be whatever she may want to depending on the mood, the company and the occasion. Such people are rare and not easy to understand. Such people are usually very lonely people, basically very simple people and good hearted people. So simple that they look complicated. So good hearted that they look frivolous. So lonely that they look arrogant. That is why there is a saying in the East, in our area, 'judge a friend from what she or he is to you not to the rest of the world'. That is why real friends are very few. And those who claim countless ones have only acquaintances and no friends at all. The real test of a soldier is in a battle under fire. How many stand this test?

One of the things that makes me write in this strain is that she has proved to be a very good friend. We are now old friends and we have shared many things, many occasions and many conditions, even the life of prison cells. I admire her all the more after these experiences. There may be a few more lines on the face, a few more wrinkles here and there and more grey hair under the spray of other colours, but all these things are marks of life lived with distinction, through all kinds of weather and conditions, through lonely valleys and crowds and through bright lights of palaces and dark shadows of prisons, through air-conditioned homes and aircraft, and hot and humid and mosquito ridden mud huts and canvasses. All these marks are notches which are the glory of warriors who have fought, usually, for a noble cause be they men or women.

One of the jolts that I received after partition was separation from my friend Bhaiya, Maharaja Cooch Behar. Life is association of human beings and one of the important things in friendship is to keep this association alive. Last I had met him was in Calcutta where I had gone for my nephew's wedding in December,' 68. I was staying with him, not at Woodlands, the big house with the Cricket ground, but in Woodland Park, because he had sold the house with its grounds. Woodlands was a historic house because when Lord Cornwallis brought the sons of Tippu Sultan from Seringapatam they were housed here. Later the Cooch Behar's bought this property from Tippu's family. Across the road to it was Belvadere, the house where the Viceroy used to come and stay when visiting Calcutta after the capital moved to New Delhi.

I found Bhaiya a changed man. He had had a bad accident playing polo in Jaipur when the horse had come down with him and then had rolled over him. He never regained his health completely after that. He remained in critical condition in hospital for weeks. His memory had been affected. He hated the thought that he was to remain semi-invalid for the rest of his life. Doctors had advised him to meet his old friends but the ones very close to him had moved to Pakistan. He was delighted to see me and kept on saying 'Shero we have not met for ages'. I found his mind sometimes off-track but he always came back correct about the past. His liver had been damaged not so much because of the fall but from over-drinking. Though to look at, for most, he was the same.

He had long chats with me in the bedroom about the old days. He was bitter about the manner in which his family had shown the attitude towards his marriage with Gina. He complained to me about his sister Ayesha too, 'I hardly see your

friend...' When I told her this she also complained 'we are not welcome. He is surrounded by her friends'. It was sad. But Ayesha and Jai did come for drinks the next day before lunch. It used to be such a happy family. The whole thing was tragic to me.

He had been in love when young and wanted to marry Princess Indira of Kapurthala. But Ma for some reason would not agree to it, in spite of the fact that she was the daughter (the eldest of the three) of one of her best friends Tikka Rani Sahiba of Kapurthala and had been named after her. This had upset Bhaiya. The lady died early in London — never married. I remember asking him once why he did not marry or becoming pally with one of his own kind. He had replied, 'Much safer to be chummy with the kind I cannot marry.' I don't think he ever forgave Ma for this.

I am not sure how he met Gina Egan. Meeting and getting to know was easy for him, he was handsome, very charming and very eligible. But to cross that thin invisible line of matrimony was something quite different for him. As time passed he became lonely and there was an urge for a companion. He had always been attracted to European women, because he was very European himself in his habits, Harrow and Cambridge were bound to leave their mark. When I met him last in December 68, he had been married to Gina for some time. I cannot claim that I knew her. She was not accepted by Ma or for that matter, really, by any other member of the family.

I tried to spend as much time as I could with Bhaiya when I was there. But he moved among people I did not know. Being the gentleman that he was he defended the action of marrying the person he did, stubbornly. He got upset when his wife was slighted in any way. I coud see that this had affected his health too. Sometimes he used to mix up things about the past. He was not the same Bhaiya, he had lost the will to live. 'Shero they were good days, there is nothing left now.' When we parted, we both had tears in our eyes, he was a person who kept his emotions hidden till he drowned them in his drinks. He was a very sensitive man and he was a great gentleman. He never hurt anybody but got hurt himself many times, even that was kept hidden within himself and tried to drown his hurt with drink.

He was a generous man. When he knew of my plans in 1947 on my return from USA, all he had asked me was for the address of my bank. If I did any business it was through him. He used to do my investment. We shared race-horses which I find was not profitable because he was too generous to his Trainers. Once with great flourish we had bought a nice colt from abroad, 'Crafty Caddy'. He turned out to be not so crafty and when he had an accident and we claimed the insurance money we were told that it had not been insured for the last year or two. He told me this, walking into my room smiling sheepishly and said, 'Sorry Shero my fault'. He bought all my shares at par when some had been very low, but then he was generous. When I got there — the money was waiting for me in Pakistan. What a friend, I miss him terribly. They don't make them like that any more.

He had a brilliant brain. I found that out when he was my second Adjutant in the First Punjab (Auk's Battalion) for the Zipper Operation in 1945. And then in Malaya when we had the task of taking over and guarding the Singapore naval base and disarming 250 thousand Japanese prisoners of War. He was always by my side — so I had ample opportunity to assess him at work. He took his duties most conscientiously. I was a hard task master, never mixed work with pleasure or friendship with work. I had no complaints about him. He impresses me so much that I wrote a letter to Chief, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck (Colonel of the Battalion) about his devotion to duty and how every one with whom he came in

contact with had respect and regard for him. Within a few weeks of that letter he was knighted — a K.C.S.I. — Knight Commander of the Star of India.

At the surrender ceremony when Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten took the surrender from the Japanese Commander on 12th September,' 45 in the Singapore Municipal Hall, he was sitting by my side representing the Princes of India. I was representing India. Both sitting senior to all the Brass including General Slim (later Field Marshal) the 14th Army Commander and General Sir Miles Dempsey South-East Asia C-in-C, etc. A bit embarrassing, but we took it in our stride.

He did his duties with such poise and efficiency that I felt proud of him. How many knew Bhaiya like this. In one or two books that I have come across about the Princes of India, such rubbish has been written about him, about his lapses, turning up late for dinners or for cricket match engagements. When duty was to be done, he was as sober as me and I have never touched a drop in my life. Even in the mess when offered a drink he declined if he had work to do later. Of course he enjoyed his drinks. Of course he drank a lot at times but then he was relaxing but he never became offensive or rowdy. He just went to sleep. Many a times I had to help him back which was not an easy task. And every time the next day he would quietly come in my room and say, 'Shero I am sorry....' He was a gentleman.

My attraction to the Cooch Behar family started with him when he had dropped me back to Sandhurst after I had been staying with them in Dechet in'32. I had first met him in'31.

All this is not written as a tribute. For friends do not pay tributes to one another, they just respect and love each other and say nothing — friendships are not expressed they are felt. Like feelings that cannot fully be described by a pen on paper. I miss my Bhaiya as much today as I missed him when I said Khuda Hafiz (God's care) to him in January 68. He is one of those few that have left a deep mark on me. Marks on hearts don't disappear with time, if any thing there are felt more when memory keeps flying back to the past and looks for happier days gone by, in the heart. I could write a book about him but he is too precious to me to be shared with others. Sometimes he pays me a visit in my dreams smiling in that most disarming smile of his, 'Hello Shero. How are you?' No one left to say that to me today.

Tum Or men mil gaiy to kiya hoga?
Dariya sehara chala to kiya hoga?
If you and I meet — What will happen?
If a river goes to the desert — What will happen?
Rah-e-Ulfat me dekh ker jana
Ajnabe mil giya to kiya hoga?
Walk carefully on the path of love —
If a stranger meets you there — What will happen?
Wajh to ishq men nahi hoti,
Yunhi gar ho giya to kiya hoga?
There is no logic in love,
If it just happens — What will happen?
Is mohabat men kiya nahi hota?
Ghair apna bana to kiya hoga?
What does not happen in love?
If an outsider becomes one's own — What will happen?
Dil men rakhna to tum ko assan hai,
Aankh par ban gai to kiya hoga?
It is easy to hide you in the heart,
But if the eyes gets upset — What will happen?
Chand aansoo to chhup he jatey hen,
Koyi dariya bana to kiya hoga?

A few tears can be hidden —
But if one becomes a river — What will happen?
Ishq men to usool kiya hoga,
Sher sa mil gaya to kiya hoga?
In love there are no principles,
If you meet a person like Sher — What will happen?

He would have liked these couplets. He liked the poetry I wrote and recited and would have learnt them by heart and recited them to me when in the mood in his broken Urdu and Bengali accent gazing át the parade of silver framed beauties in his bedroom. And when well away, would have hummed it and then in his friendly and cynical mild way would have 'sung', 'I wonder who is kissing her now.'

He had so many facets to his character. He had a big heart in which many resided and used to tease me by saying, 'But Shero you are something different. Don't you ever leave me.' I would like to tell him today and I know that he will hear what I will say, because the soul never dies. 'No Bhaiya I have not left you, but you have left me, for more peaceful abodes'.

I am sure this message will reach him; the soul never dies it just goes back to the 'ONE Soul', the Being, from which it came originally.

Ma died on 11 September 1968 — Bhaiya was dead on 11 April 1969 — that was the end of Cooch Behar for me.

JAIPUR

I came here to Jaipur to write a story of the Princes of India as I knew them. I came to this Pink City because, today, it is the heart of Rajasthan, the capital of it. In the past it was the closest to the Court at Agra and Delhi.

From childhood I have been attracted to this area of sand and sand hills, of rocks and hills of the same material turned into different shades, white, pink, sandy, pink marble, yellow marble, blue and evergreen — all hard, having been formed by the heat of the sun of centuries and centuries. The companions of the people were their camels that could live without water for days and could eat anything, even the thorniest of bush that this inhospitable land produced. There were hardly any trees or pastures as one understands by such an expression elsewhere, where rain is regular and the soil has not had so much attention from the sun.

They lived an isolated life. They had little to do but to amuse themselves with what they had — hard hills on hard rocks. They played about with it with

instruments which they made from the dark metal which they found in the area, here and there. They built houses and castles and palaces of these rocks. They carved this stone into beautiful lattice which gave them shade and breeze in their homes. Because nature had dried their water, they made their artificial lakes which collected water from the hills when it rained. They carved huge tanks on top of these hillocks and hills to catch the rain water, to drink and to cultivate the land below the hills. They lived around these tanks, to protect the water source, and to be cool. They built stone walls around their dwellings under the forts. From these hard daily chores of survival grew the proud people of these areas. They lived in isolation. They worshipped the sun which gave them light, and the rock, which made them what they were. They worshipped the clouds which gave them rain, which hand in hand with their sun — gave them food from the soil to survive — to worship the Creator of all these things.

They had little to cultivate so they had all the time in the world to look for shaae or create shade from the rock and stone that was there to be used. They made their dwellings strong and deep to find protection from the burning sun, when the sun and the earth saw more of one another — which they called summer. They name their months according to the movement of these two — they derived their seasons according to the same movements.

To get back to this romantic land of rock and Rajputs — why are they called Rajputs anyway? I don't know. And they do not know it themselves, though they will not admit it. Living in the kind of environment as they did, each individual became a rock in his own right. And rock has a base which bears its weight. They were so few then (that was a long time ago — now soon they will be too many). There is an old saying in our parts, my late mother used to use this expression a lot:

> **Har pathar apni jagha per bhari hay.**
> *Every stone is weighty in its own place.*

The expression must have come from here, though I haven't heard it used here. So all these 'stones' because they had their own area or weight and importance had their own domain — a Raj. As their land originated from explosions of sun and vapour, which smashed these rocky hills and made these boulders for them — they styled themselves sons of Raj. Raj is also symbolized by sun, not only because it gives light and heat but because they believed it also gave them life.

They are warriors by instinct because of the battles of survival that they have had to fight, first with nature and then with the creations of nature. Being few, they were able to establish themselves in the few places that were livable — mountain ranges and ravines, from where they could collect water, and make their dwellings, kill the game that was available in the valleys, and with hard labour and effort till the soil (for food) that had not given shelter to seed for centuries. Fights among themselves were natural, as they grew in number so they needed more space. As most of it was desert so they had combats for the suitable sites in the Aravali Mountains. That made them hardly and taught them chivalry. They did not kill to end but to survive — so they were generous and accepted victory with grace and defeat with dignity.

The princely houses of Rajasthan take their lineage back to the sun and moon, the origin of Earth, which we all do, but this desert and hard rock made conditions for valour and chivalry more suitable; they had to fight hard for survival, for retreat in desert spaces is not easy, the lack of their number made it also necessary not to destroy to death — thay would have left no one to fight and even less to defend

their rock homes against others. The House of Jaipur has always occupied not only a highly honoured place in this 'land of Rajputs' but a very important one because of it being the nearest House or State to the navel of the world — Delhi.

Legend says that of the two sons of Rama (of the Ramayana) Kusha emigrated from Ajodhya to Rohtas — in Gwalior in Bundelkhand. Not the Rohtas we know which was built by Sher Shah Suri to subdue the Gakhars, a few miles outside Rawalpindi on the road to Lahore, where in the fort stands the baradari built by Raja Man Singh of Amber (Jaipur) when he stayed for a few months on one of his many campaigns in that area — commanding the Moghul forces. This Rohtas is the one which was given to Askaran (Hopeful), son of Prithivi Raj of Amber by Salim Shah Suri on the intervention of Rup Singh younger brother of Bihari Mal of Amber. In time his descendants crossed over to Rajputana and founded Amber, the first capital of this House. Dhola Rao is said to have founded the Jaipur State in 967 A.D., having driven out or absorbed the petty chiefs by whom this area was occupied. This leader of the Kachhawa clan was followed by other capable leaders who besides being soldiers, proved to be able diplomats and statesmen. They kept the kings at Delhi happy — history has paid them their due.

But their period of glory starts when Raja Bihari Mal's daughter Hira Bai (her Muslim name was Marium-Uz-Zamani) married Akbar in 1563 at a place called Ratanpura in the sub-district of Sambhar when he was returning from a pilgrimage to Ajmer.

Bihari Mal acceded to the Gaddi (throne) of Amber in 1548 — to be exact on the 27th June. At that time Sher Shah's son Salim Shah was on the throne in Delhi. Bihari Mal had had to use all his talent in diplomacy to secure the Gaddi. Prithiviraj's son Puran Mal sat on the Gaddi, but he was not the eldest. He however died fighting Hindal, the younger brother of Akbar, in the battle for the possession of Alwar and Mewat over Sheikhawati (which was then not under Amber but ruled by Sheikhawatis). He was succeeded by Bhim Singh his younger brother. On his demise his younger brother Ratan Singh took the Gaddi but was killed by Askaran.

This was not taken well by the Sardars (nobles) who advised him to take a dip in the Ganges to wash his sins. In the meantime, Bihari Mal, who was in Amber, occupied his Gaddi and sent his younger brother Rup Singh to the Delhi Court. He swung opinion in his own favour. Askaran was therefore given Naywar near Gwalior from the area from which the Kachhawas originally came from in the 9th century. And Bihari Mal was confirmed in Amber and Haji Khan, the Afghan commander who had been sent to Amber to investigate was called back.

Humayun by this time had come back but died after six months, falling from the steps of his library in Purana Qila in Delhi. Akbar at that time was in the Punjab. The Afghan Haji Khan besieged the fort of Narnaul, where the Qiladar (the fortress commander) of Humayun was a man by the name of Mubaraz Khan. Bihari Mal the Raja of Amber was with him at the time. He helped to get Humayun's fortress commander out and managed to get all his things out too. This act was the making of Bihari Mal, because when Mubaraz Khan caught up with Akbar he praised Bihari Mal to him, who was sent for to the Court. Mubaraz presented him to the King who received him with favour. While he was at the Court Akbar was very impressed by Bihari Mal and his Rajput entourage. One day Akbar was having trouble with one of his favourite elephants which had gone 'mast' (wild — out of control). Akbar who was very brave and very good at handling these animals, was in trouble. The others in the arena panicked but the Rajput group under Bihari Mal stood their ground and when the animal rushed towards them they stood steadfast. Their action steadied the elephant and Akbar was then able to control him. This left a deep mark on Akbar. Later when he went to Ajmer he learnt that

one of his nobles Mirza Sharafuddin was worrying the Amber princes so he sent his commander by the name of Chaghatta Khan to instruct Sharafuddin to report to him in Ajmer with the Rajput prince — whom he had taken as hostage. Chaghatta Khan was then sent to Amber with Bihari Mal and Rup Singh the younger brother, as go between, to arrange a marriage alliance with the Rajput House.

The marriage took place in August 1562 at Ratanpura in the sub-division of Sambhar. Bihari Mal had taken his grandson Man Singh, son of Bhagwant Das, with him.

Akbar took a great liking to him and, after the marriage, took both the father and the son to Agra. It is this young Man Singh, whose sister Man Bai (Sultan-un-Nisa) married Jahangir and became the mother of Khusro. She died of a mental disorder on 16 May 1604. Jahangir then married another Rajput princess from Jodhpur, whose name was Jodha Bai, the mother of Shahjahan.

The first contact between the Moghuls and the Rajputs starts from Humayun when after his reverses against Sher Shah Suri he escaped to Rajputana and was given shelter by the Rajput princes particularly by the Raja of Jodhpur. He was assisted by the Raja of Chittor (Mewar) from where he found his way to Tharparkar (the southern district of Sindh in Pakistan today) where Akbar was born at Umarkot.

Akbar was 12 years old when his father died. The dying Humayun had advised him in front of his close friend Bairam Khan, (when he appointed him Regent), to befriend the Rajputs and not to rely entirely on his Turkish and Afghan troops. He is the one who had the foresight to build alliances with the people of the land — irrespective of the difference of religion.

It is necessary to go into the history of the House of Jaipur. The 'Daughter' about whom I write married the Maharaja of Jaipur — Man Singh II. He was born in the Isarda family and was the second son of Raja Sawai Singh — chief of Isarda and the nephew of His Highness Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh who adopted him on the 24th of March 1921, when he was renamed Man Singh by his adopted father. His first name was Mor Mukat Singh and he was born on the 21st of August 1911 at Isarda.

These names are important in this book for my story — Man Singh I, Jai Singh II and Man Singh II. Man Singh I is the maker of all that one hears about and sees in Jaipur. He is famous as Mirza (a high noble title given by Akbar) Man Singh. He was born in 1543 and died in 1614 at the age of 71. Then comes Jai Singh II who was born in 1688 and died on 22 September 1743, and ruled for 43 years, 8 months and 7 days. It is to him that the title of Sawai (in Hindi meaning one and a quarter and in Arabic meaning superior) was given about which more will follow. He is the man who built the present city of Jaipur. And then the last ruler Man Singh II — the one whom I knew was Jai. He is the modernizer of Jaipur and the one who carried the colours of Jaipur in the world, in the game of kings — Polo.

I will be as brief as I can in relating the deeds of the three above. They are important for my story. I would have given a brief history of the wives of the other two, if I knew them, as there has always been a woman behind every man. But they were behind palace walls in fortresses and whenever they did come out they came out with such protocol that no outsiders could gaze on them — everyone either bowed so low that all they could see was the ground in front of their feet or they turned their back the other way — a sign of respect and not disrespect. They did not suffocate under these conditions: their palaces were so spacious that they had their Polo grounds within the walls and played at night, specially in summer, because of the cool and to avoid the sun which has the habit of drying everything

including the fair skin of the ladies. The ball was luminous and the ground was lit by innumerable torches around the ground (mashaals).

The women of that period were far more educated than most are today — of that class. Education is not measured by the length of academic degrees that one may display with one's name. The concept of education to them was the knoweldge that one attained after learning of their past, of their faith of others and of the conditions that prevailed in other lands, especially those of their neighbours, for 'one can exist without friends but one cannot live without neighbours.' I have mentioned this aspect of their background because this way of living was very protected for some of them; their outlet was indulging in hunting, poetry and affairs now and again. But it all happened within the walls and gardens of their extensive palaces or in jungles when hunting or in the quiet when hawking. There were no scandals. If caught by misfortune by the other party, the man was eliminated under some pretext and the lady told to be more careful. They produced no bastards for the moment one was on its way, their removal was arranged. In any case the moment a prince made a wife or a concubine pregnant she was removed into special quarters where a close guard was kept of slave girls by eunuchs — pregnancy made affairs safer sometimes. Fortunately in those days there was a touch of chivalry, if other methods of disposing of the proof of an affair failed, they undertook some dramatic acts of self-destruction or the proof was disposed of, but this was dangerous because with it both the mother and child were identified and the purge within the walls was more extreme; which sometimes caused serious royal embarrassments.

Coming to the history of these people that I am writing about I find that they were exceptional people in many ways. They paid a great deal of attention to early education. For example when Man Singh-I was born his horoscope said that he will reach great heights and his name will spread throughout the lands, near and far, but he must be kept away from his father for 12 years. So the child was moved to a village Mouzamabad about 40 miles from Amber with his mother and other close relatives. But in addition to that a hundred boys of his group were colleced, with good noble backgrounds, and a training school was established there in which Man Singh could be educated — in the company of his age group who came from the same area. They all received a broad education of their own traditions first, hand in hand with that of soldiering — horsemanship, sword slinging, archery, lance work and even play with gunpowders and early weapons associated with this black dust discovered in China in those days. It was the leadership of this gang of one hundred that made Man Singh the sought — after commander of the Moghul forces. He became the Governor (Subedar) of the far flung provinces of Bihar and Bengal and Afghanistan — a Hindu nobleman completely trusted by his Muslim Master.

Quite early in his association with the royal court he received the title of Mirza — a title which indicated that he was one of the family. The Queen Marium-uz-Zamani (Hira Bai of Amber — his paternal aunt) had done her share in his getting this intimate recognition and of course later the marriage of his sister to Jahangir, the eldest son of Akbar and later the Emperor consolidated his position further within the family. He was consulted not only on state affairs by the Emperor but was the one who was consulted the most on private family affairs. The family of the House of Amber and later of Jaipur had a unique position with regard to their intimate and close relationship with the Royal House. It was Man Singh, the brother-in-law of Jahangir, who was despatched by Akbar to deal with the former's rebellion. His sister and aunt both played their part in bringing Akbar and Jahangir together again. But the person who stopped the battle was another woman, the

mother of Akbar, who had gone out to face the rebellious grandson. 'Conquer me first before you take on your father and destroy all that your grandfather and great grandfather have done. Come, attack me first, I am the root and nourisher of the tree, that you are out to cut....' That dialogue brought Jahangir to his senses. His brother-in-law Man Singh was close at hand to take advantage of this and went up to Jahangir and after Salaam put his arms round him. Man Singh at that time was leading Akbar's forces against Jahangir.

The power and influence of the woman won the battle both for the Emperor and the son and heir. When Jahangir fell at his father's feet and asked for pardon which was granted with honour, Man Singh was the only one person present there. He heard the Emperor say to his son 'Strike anyone in the world you like, if necessary, but never your father, for remember he is the trunk of the tree that you would be striking and you yourself are the big branch of it....' An empire was saved and a friendship between a Muslim and a Hindu was further consolidated.

Yesterday, on Friday the 13th, I went to 'the valley of the Dead' — Gattore. This area is in the tangi (tight) pass created by the two spurs, one coming down from the Ganesh Temple hill and the other from the edge of the Nahargarh (Tiger Fort) heights. The site was selected by the man who planned and made the city of Jaipur which we see today. The man who received the title of Sawai as a minor from Aurangzeb. The story from records goes like this :

> When on the demise of Raja Bishan Singh, his son, the heir, the little Jai Singh, was presented to Emperor Aurangzeb in Agra, this little prince did his salaams, from three stances with bows and folded hands, like the others which amused the Emperor a great deal who was then at an advanced age. As he advanced to touch the throne with the folded hands the Emperor bent forward and clasped both his hands in his and pulled him nearer and said smiling : 'Now how will you get your hands free?' The little boy without much hesitation replied, 'When a man holds a woman's hand in his, he pledges protection to her. Your Majesty has held both my hands in yours so I have your protection for — ever and so why should I free my hands.'

This pleased the Emperor enormously and he exclaimed — 'He is Sawai, (he is superior) he will be better than Jai Singh the first'. From that moment he was styled with this distinction.

But it was Emperor Farukhsiyar, Aurangzeb's grandson who confirmed the honour on him officially by a special farman in which he bestowed additional honours upon his friend Jai Singh II, the Raja of Amber. He was titled Mirza, later, after his ancestor Man Singh the First. He was given the standard of command of Haft Hazari (seven thousand), horse and the privilege of salute by drums and trumpets on his entry.

He laid the foundation stone of the city of Jaipur on 17 November 1728, which was recognised by a farman from the Imperial Court, 7 years later — on 18 April 1734 — as the Sawai Jaipur City. So the name of this city should actually be Sawai Jaipur and not just Jaipur. Why this 'superiority' has been dropped I don't know. It may be out of modesty. Or it may be out of prudence — most superior things have become irksome to not-so-superior style of things today. And we live in a world of 'crowd', superior things have become a minority — who get trampled if they resist, or even if they raise a voice in defence of their rights. Human rights can be recognized by inhuman people. This beautiful Pink City — pink I remembered was a replacement of Sawai, as 'superior' people usually have pink cheeks on fair skins — because they are better fed, clothed and housed and less in number; this is gradually and systematically becoming less pink every day and more dirty black,



Raja Mirza Man Singh - The maker of what one sees in Jaipur today.The Emperor Akbar's favourite and the ruler of 27 parganas how assembled so much wealth that a Fort next to Amber Palace Fort had to be built to house his treasures. He was a giant of a man and started as Emperor Akbar's head of Personal bodyguard. Later became the Governor of Kabul and Commander - in - Chief of Akbar's forces. His sister was No. 1 wife of Jahangir the Emperor

Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II of Jaipur who received the Title of Sawai from Emperor Aurangzeb. A great astronomer, the man who planned Jaipur that one sees today





The young Maharaja of Jaipur (Man Singh Sawai II) at the age of 23 - who won most Polo Championships in his life time



Winners of the Indian Polo Championship in Calcutta, in 1934. Right to left: H.H. the Maharaja of Jaipur, Rao Raja Hanut Singh, Mr. Winston Guest, Raj Kumar Prithi Singh of Baria



Jai (H.H. Jaipur) and Self at Lahore Polo ground No. 1.
December 1954



Standing: Muchu Chaudhry, M. Mohammad Ali Noon, M. Gulsher Noon, Rao Raja Hanut Singh, Self, Hissam Effendi, Heskey Baig, Hamid Noon, Umar, ADC

Sitting: My wife (Silvy), H.H. Jaipur, Begum Bhopal, Raja Gazanfar Ali (Ambassador of Pakistan to India) Her H. Jaipur, Joe Yousaf, Salma (Heskey's Wife) H.H. Cooch Behar, Marry (Mrs. Effendi)

On ground: Siku Baig, Devika, Harry, Rippu (Qudsia Sultan), Jagat, Kishan Singh, Azmat.

Jaipur March 1955



Polo Party at New Delhi 1955, Self - Sardar Man Singh and Sir Khizar Hayyat Tiwana



Bhaiya dancing with lady Khizar Hayyat Tiwana New Delhi March 1955 - Polo visit



Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II of Jaipur 1835 to 1880 A.D. A great photographer and an Artist who produced Shakespearian plays in the Palace Theatre



Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur at Rambagh Palace, where she was able to play a major part in leading the purdah women of Jaipur out of seclusion - 1943



Her H. Jaipur addressing a political gathering



A picture after the wedding at Cooch Behar Palace May 1940

with names of shops and other items which sell in shops, written on every wall and door which can take the broad black brush. One hopes and prays that tradition and cleanliness which are the pillars of every religion, faith, society and colour of this city completely and the slums look like besieging army camps around the majestic forts and palaces which are already showing signs of the onslaught in spite of the dignity they portray — like the last defiance of a brave animal — four legged or two legged.

Before I get more involved in this subject which is like a sea without shore I must get back to the dead and their deeds or misdeeds, much easier to write upon and far more interesting.

Mirza Jai Singh Sawai had many illustrious ancestors. I must remind myself and the reader that I am not writing the history of Jaipur state, as it was, or that of Rajasthan. I am writing just enough to find out and to portray what kind of a heritage and ancestry Man Singh II — the Jai I knew — inherited from his past. I am not even writing about him. I am actually writing about his wife Ayesha — Gayetri Devi — the third Maharani of Jaipur. I have to write about her husband, because I must be clear and portray what attracted her to marry this man, already with two wives and with two children each. I am writing about men and women and not about Maharajas and Maharanis — sometimes these two can be different things. Because he was brought up in this city of Jaipur, I must write about the origin of it and also about the man who built it. That must have had some part in making him what he developed to be. Now for example his name Man Singh, this was not his original name. His name was Mur Mukat Singh. He was under 12 years old when he was adopted. He had an elder brother. There are various reasons why he was adopted and not his elder brother, but I think the logical one was that he was young enough to be trained and looked intelligent.

Jai's biography has just come out. The author has given some surprises to his readers. But truth can be like fiction sometimes. I knew his friends, from Jaipur, more than I knew him, till later when he married Ayesha.

I started my chapter with the intention of visiting his grave or where a marble mausoleum or cenotaph has been created to mark the place where he was cremated and ashes are buried, near the spot, where his adopted father, was also put to fire. The ashes usually go to mingle with the water of the Ganges. Some are sometimes kept to be buried in the garden under a favourite plant. But the ashes of the flesh means nothing, the important thing to know would be where does the spirit return; to some pleasant abode I hope. My belief is that it goes to the same Great Spirit from which we all take our birth.

The Chatri (marble structure in the shape of an umbrella) is made of pure white spotless marble. In the middle of the floor is written 'Om' — God. I had taken some red and yellow roses with me. I placed them on the Om and stood in silence reciting some verses from the Quran, my holy book. It was difficult to believe that he was dead and that some of his ashes must be in the dust around the memorial. I felt like sitting and meditating so I sat down leaning against the pillar near the Nahargarh battlement side. And what do I see : a small goat had climbed up the steps to the first platform of the monument and was chewing the rose petals that had fallen from the garland basket and was trying to come up to the upper platform where I was sitting. She made it in the third leap and looked so satisfied with her achievement and particularly with the bunch of flowers in the middle under the dome. She walked up carefully to the centre, looked right and left and then put her mouth to the roses. She pulled back with a start, having struck a thorn protecting the roses. But then munched carefully and munched them with apparent delight.

Behind me was the Chatri of Maharaja Madhu Singh Sawai, who had adopted Jai. The Chatri was an elaborate affair, double storied, and had lovely carvings in the marble on it. I looked round for a while, how silent the whole place was. I was all alone, except for the goats; the man who had accompanied me was snoring in the car. My mind went back into the past again when Madho Singh adopted Jai.

Maharaja Madho Singh II who was adopted by Ram Singh II and was the opposite of his adopted father, a very conservative and very protocol—conscious person and it seems a very shrewd and simple man. Montague, the Secretary of States of India, when he visited India during the viceroyalty of Lord Chelmsford, of which the outcome was the Montague Chelmsford Reforms in 1919 and the Chamber of Princes in 1921, has recorded that, 'I have tried my best to get something out of His Highness Jaipur about his political views, but all I have managed to get is a Hukam (order)!' It is interesting to see the picture of this revered and shrewd prince standing bare foot next to Mr. Montague. But he left a happy and prosperous Jaipur and selected an able heir—preferring him to his elder brother.

It was such a tragedy for the Princes that in 1947 there was no Montague in the Labour Party and no Viceroy like Curzon to give the Princes a dignified and a secure end. It was the Montague Chelmsford Reforms in 1910 that brought about the birth of the Chamber of Princes which was not joined by the big five — Hyderabad, Mysore, Kashmir, Baroda and Gwalior, in spite of all the persuasion by people like Bhopal. They did not even have some kind of union among themselves. Disunity among the Indian rulers in the past had encouraged the East India Company to gradually become the Paramount Power and the same disunity was responsible for the end that they received.

I got up from the corner I was sitting in, leaning against the marble pillar. I had some difficulty in rising, my legs had become numb. But soon the needles started and I managed to be on my feet. While my legs 'slept' my mind had wandered into the past. I still could not believe that the man, this Prince, this Maharaja, Jai was dead and that I was sitting in the pavilion marking his grave. No longer striking the ball with ease and timing that it went like a bullet where it was meant to go. Or chatting to Polo players and other friends usually from the same fraternity, at the bar, with a mild smile in his eyes and lips at the same time, his special attraction.

I walked to the centre of the Chatri and stood where Om (God) was written and where some petals of red and yellow roses still remained, escaping from the goat because the thorns had come to their protection — nature thinks of every thing; thorns next to roses. Jai had been in a way a rose among thorns; a gentle Prince in the rugged thorny bushes in the hard rocky hills of Rajasthan.

He had been a modern, but a kind and firm ruler from the start of his rule. He had been conscious of the changing political atmosphere in his country. Wise statesmanship lies in anticipating the trend of popular feeling, and taking timely action to guide it along proper channels.

He was an admirer of the British and kept the family tradition of being close and loyal to the Power in Delhi. After 1858 the real power had moved to London. It was his endeavour to try and get close to the Royal Family, as his great ancestor Mirza Man Singh Sawai after whom he had been re-named, had done in the days of Emperor Akbar, at Agra and Delhi. In 1911 Jaipur had willingly given land needed for the new capital that had been gifted to Mirza Man Singh by the Mughal Emperor; hence the Jaipur column right in front of the Viceroy's Palace, in New Delhi.

In 1939 he had volunteered eagerly for active service to the Crown because of his conviction that the British were fighting for democratic values in the world.

The formation of the United Nations later was to him a further confirmation of the faith. He was not an intellectual or a scintilating conversationalist. But he was a wise man. He had assimilated his ancestral history. He had learnt from it; some thing rare. He had learnt that dangers shared in common establish a close brotherhood among fighting men, be they generals, or privates, or commoners, or princes.

I think he was one of the few who appreciated the changes that the war was going to bring and had gradually prepared himself for it. His actions in his state after the war are proof of it. But he found politics irksome. He had not been prepared for the frank talk that it brings in public. The action of his wife Ayesha, in joining politics, to serve the people was appreciated but not considered wise. She came from a different background. A tribal, born in the areas adjoining the hills of Sikkim and Bhutan, stretching down to the borders of Bengal and Darjeeling hills, she was apt to be a Bengal tigress.

He was very attached to her in the end, he leaned more on her than she on him. He even gave a political speech for her sake in a public gathering. This opened him to public replies. Something he was not accustomed to. Neither of them were used to under-the-belt political opponents' attacks. He did not like all this at all. The mind soared. And he himself withdrew. Supporting from behind the scene, he was her real power. Her entry in politics however changed their daily routine and style of living. He did not like it. He wanted to get away from it all but could not express it in so many words for fear of hurting her.

This public life after the diplomatic life later where certain things have to be done was not his style of living. He had been the master of his actions. He and his ancestors were used to palace politics and diplomacy but not to the one of pliable principles and smart talking. He soon got tired of that as well and came home.

I noticed a lot of change in him when I met him in late 1969 in London, when my wife and I were returning from the 24th United Nations Session. He looked tired and haggard. I felt a touch of disappointment within him, from the way things were going back home. He was not a complainer. But he did not like the way some of the members had criticised him when he had spoken in the Upper House (Rajya Sabha) on the Hindu-Muslim riots in Gujrat. The very riots on which I had spoken in the U.N. 'There is nothing one can do for the people when one is in the opposition. All the sources of help are controlled by the government. It is frustrating. I cannot now help my people in Jaipur in the manner I did before. But they still come to me. It is sickening,' I remember his conversation in Bodens Ride (the residence of General Sir Rodney and Lady Moore) in Ascot.

Frustration is the biggest killer. This was October '69 and he died on 24 June '70. The end came as he would have wished, on a horse or by a horse, on a Polo ground. He just rolled off in sleep—in an eternal dream. Leaving everyone behind stunned.

Many tributes were written. I will quote a few for the reader to assess what kind of a man he was.

Dalel Singh, his Private Secretary and a close associate of his, had this to say about his Maharaja :

> "I served him for four years as his Private Secretary and then in his government as Home Secretary and later as Development Secretary last of all as Secretary to the Council of Ministers. I recall, with much gratitude his unfailing courtesy and kindness to me and what a real pleasure it was to me to serve such a gracious Ruling Prince. He was a generous host, a charming and dignified personality and a very considerate master.

"My association with His Highness began when we were both almost children. He was born the second son of Maharaja Sawai Singhji of Isarda, my maternal uncle. He was named Mormukat Singhji. When he was about eight years old, his father arranged with my father, Major General Apji Sir Onkar Singhji that he and his elder brother, Kanwar Bahadur Singhji, should be educated at Kotah under the care of my father. So both the brothers arrived at Kotah one summer evening. They stayed with us at Palaitha House and we all lived together, studied together and played together. My father employed Pandit Harihar Nathji Sukhia as private tutor to Bahadur Singhji and Mormukat Singhji. As a young boy, Kanwar Mormukat Singhji was marked for his polite and good behaviour and endeared himself to everyone in our family, as well as others at Kotah including His Late Highness Maharao Shri Umaed Singhji who was also his uncle, having married the second sister of Maharaja Sawai Singhji of Isarda.

"I may mention that it was during his stay at Kotah that young Mormukat Singhji learnt his first lessons in the game of Polo and it was a matter of immense pride and gratification to those of us who had played with him in those days to see him later blossom forth into a Polo player of international fame. The wooden dummy horse on which he practised his first Polo strokes is still preserved at Kotah.

"The question of the adoption of an heir by His Highness Maharaja Sawai Madho Singhji of Jaipur was a subject of lively interest to all of us during those days. His Highness Maharaja Sawai Madho Singhji himself had been adopted as Ruler of Jaipur from the Isarda family. Therefore we expected that one of the two Isarda brothers would be selected by him as his heir. At that time, we did not know on which brother his choice would fall but it was a matter of very pleasant discussion and 'leg-pulling' in our family; and we used to joke with both the brothers about who out of them would be heir to the throne of Jaipur. One fine morning in the spring of 1921, when we all woke up at the usual hour and went for our breakfast to our mother's room, we found that young Mormukat Singhji was not there. We all asked mother where he was. With a voice full of joy and emotion she told us that he had become Maharaja Kumar of Jaipur and had left early at dawn for Jaipur. But the event appeared to us like a fairy tale coming true and it was thrilling to feel that a cousin of ours was the 'fairy prince'.

"Kanwar Mormukat Singhji was escorted from Kotah in a Rolls Royce car belonging to His Highness Kotah, by Col. Mo Caughnegy, Political Agent at Kotah, and Capt. T. R. Livesey, Guardian to His present Highness — then Maharaja Kumar of Kotah. They escorted him from Kotah to Delhi where the party was received by a deputation from Jaipur, consisting of the Political Agent at Jaipur and Sir Charles Cleveland, one of the trusted ministers of His Highness Maharaja Sawai Madho Singhji. From Deoli he was driven to Jaipur and after his safe arrival at the City Palace, formal declaration of his adoption was made and Mormukat Singhji was named Maharaja Kumar Singhji of Jaipur.

"His last visit to Kotah was in January 1970 when he came to pay a condolence visit on the demise of his aunt, Her Highness the Rajmata Sahiba of Kotah. A little before this visit, we had heard that he had

been unwell. After the condolence visit was over, when I was talking to him in his room at the palace at Kotah, I enquired about his recent indisposition and was distressed to learn that he had one day felt very unwell and had fainted. But when I suggested to him that it was essential for him to curtail physical exertion on the Polo field, he laughed and said to me in his characteristic jovial manner, 'Do you want me to die in bed? I want to die on the battlefield and the Polo field'. I never realised that his words were prophetic."

K. Bhagwati Singh of Chomu who was with me at RIMC Dehra Dun, a distinguished soldier, noted this on Jai:

"His ability to see the other man's point of view paid him handsome dividends throughout his career. This, coupled with his excellent qualities of head and heart, enabled him to give the correct lead and guidance to his Cabinet and other Administrators in the State of Jaipur. He was a capable statesman and as Rajpermukh (Governor) of Rajasthan, he, with his perfect tact, disarming smile and great powers of leadership always carried his Cabinet with him."

A.G.N. Bahura Sahib with whom I had spent a few hours for many days in the library, in the city palace has this to record :

"He established a Museum and threw open these valuable assets of his heritage to the general public and visitors from abroad.

This big collection of manuscripts which came down to him from many generations was also a matter of concern to His Highness and he was very anxious to make the best use of it by establishing a research centre in his Palace. He invited the eminent scholar Dr. C. Kunhan Raja of the Madras University in 1945-46 to prepare a catalogue of the manuscripts and to submit a scheme for the reorganization of the Pothikhana as a research centre."

H.H. Yashwant Rao Pawar of Dewas Jr. who was married to Ayesha's younger sister, Maneka had this to say about his brother-in-law:

"To those who came in close contact with him, particularly those whom he liked or loved, and gave his confidence to, he would give an occasional glimpse of very great depth of thought and understanding and an uncanny appreciation of a situation completely missed."

And now this is what the last Viceroy Earl Mountbatten has to say:

"I paid my full tribute to the late Maharaja of Jaipur in the Guards Chapel of London on the 24th July, 1970.

The last time I saw him was only three or four days before his death at the end of June, 1970. He and the Maharani were at a small dinner attended by the Queen and Prince Philip and after dinner we got together in a corner of the Drawing Room and talked about what was happening in India for more than half an hour. His views were very statesmanlike and sensible as ever.

"We talked as always about his beautiful wife Ayesha, the Maharani Gayetri Devi and he shared my admiration for her public work. She is not Her Highness the Rajmata Saheba and continues to do splendid public work, which I am certain is what her late husband would have wished her to do."

Prince Philip's tribute cannot be matched. It is quoted in full :

"It is one thing to write about somebody's character and achievements but it is quite another problem to write about a friend. Friendship is such a personal and unpredictable quality. It's not based on careful

assessment and it seldom comes in for analysis. Jai was friend but I never stopped to consider why he was a friend or what his friendship meant. All I know is that it was always a pleasure to meet him again and to be in his company. It was a delight to stay with him and as a guest he was always welcome whether it was a grand occasion or in a small party.

"Just why he would have given me such pleasure is almost impossible to say. Perhaps if I were to read perceptive biography I might be able to point to certain characteristics and say that those were the ones I recognized and liked about him. Even that, I suspect, would only be half the story, I simply don't believe it is possible to define the basis of friendship, it is a quality that has to be experienced, it goes beyond rational description.

"I am not going to try to guess what Jai meant to other people or what sort of contribution he made to life. All I know is that I gained immeasurably from his friendship in all sorts of circumstances; in the things we did together, like playing Polo or shooting or just sitting and chatting under the moon in Jaipur or in a country house in England.

"I suppose one is affected differently by different people, some annoy and irritate, some are stimulating, others again are happy and entertaining. To me Jai had a serene quality, a sort of cheerful calm, which may well have been exasperating for some, but to me it was a most endearing and enjoyable characteristic. He combined with that a very rare quality in men, he was supremely civilized. Kind and modest but with an unerring instinct for the highest standards of human ambition and behaviour."

Perhaps this is a prejudiced view but then friendship is prejudice.
How true — As I have said earlier in the book somewhere —

Aur rishte to hadison ke hein,
Dosti ke to dil ke hote hein,
All other relationships are of accidents,
But that of the friendship are of the heart. (S. A.)

JODHPUR

Rajputana was the size of France. By the inhospitality of the arid nature of this part, the vitality of its people, which helps them to live in this land of low mountains and ravines and pools and conditons which produce vigour and chivalry. For there was little else but battle for survival every other day which had helped its people to retain their ancient political structure which the Moghuls and their predecessors had been unable to destroy.

Rajput history is enriched by the exotic and improbable, more incredible in places than the wildest fantasies of Hollywood.

Colonel Tod writing of the siege of Chittor by Akbar has the following to say about the man from whom the name of Pataudi takes birth: 'But the names which shine highest in this gloomy page of the annals of Mewar names immortalized by Akbar's own pen, are those of Jaimal and Pulta. The first was a Rathore of Maitria

house, the bravest of the brave clans of Marwar; the other was head of the Jugnwats, another clan descended from Chinda. Their names 'Jaimal and Pulta', always inseparable, are household words in Mewat.'

Pulta was a Mewati. They held the area upto Delhi and my ancestors subdued them in the 16th century and a number of them were converted to Islam. The others withdrew to Marwar, which means 'the region of death.'

Comfort, the marabit of rebellion, had already provided the formula — 'One must be just before being generous, one must have bread before having cake.' Thus the ethic of luxury will be renamed in favour of the bitter morality of the Empire Builder. 'The Rebel', by Albert Carnes.

This book is not a biography of any of the princes mentioned in the book. There is no hero — if there is, it is the heritage.

Their past is a story of amazement and excitement, of tragedy fringed with greatness and failure — a story worth telling for its own sake if not for lessons for the future. The British Indian Empire has gone. The native princes have gone because their native states have gone. All the promises made to them by the successors of the British have gone. The treaties on parchment paper have also gone either in some tin box in some archives or licked by white ants. But surely the heritage remains. The titles may not be there but the names are there. The palaces may have become hamlets or just gone to dust by lack of repair, but surely the name is there. The identity is there. The respect to any House is from the one who dwells in it and not vice versa.

Every House that has come into being is from the Old one. A country has to exist but the history is more and more identified these days by the man who rules. In our parts it has been the one man rule that has been making history, and that has to be remembered even if it had meant the breaking up of the original one. The left over has been called the new so-and-so or such-and-such. All this has been done in the name of religion and democracy. Human rights have been guaranteed by the whim of an individual. Therefore, as always there will be a breach between what actually happened and what has been allowed to be written for posterity.

The history of British India has not been an exception. And our past is very much linked with that past. The gap between the idea and the realities, is an important field for study. It is the gap between the historians and the administrators. In our case the situation is pathetic because the country from the beginning has been governed by bureaucracy, first civil and then military. And now by a combination of or both with the politician giving the facade of democracy. Overwhelmed by the controlled mass media and the absence of public opinion and dazzled by the banners of religion one can see neither the tragedy nor the achievement.

But it is possible for a historian to impose on his vast canvas what makes up the picture of the past — virtually any point of view, to enclose it within the limits and region of the particular frame. The Princes of India could be seen as just another episode in the long drama of the ancient land — the Peg in the ocean (the navel of the world). Most of the princes owe their origin to the Moghuls and the British. And both have gone leaving behind little more than a few buildings, some poetry and some tales of achievements and failures, of both tolerance and brutality. The Moghuls tried to sophisticate the brutal with Muslim codes, breaking the rules here and there. For political expediency they inter-married in Hindu Houses of Rajputana, that isolated area in the middle of the Peg protected by arid rocks and sands and the shrub, that helped the inhabitants in their battle against the intruders.

The history of the princes has to be an exercise in geography and in the study of ideas. The princes were created to be Indian in blood and colour, but English in

taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect. And these middle-men were to carry the means of western science and know-how to the ignorant peasantry.

The old free and easy life of the English in India was almost over with the Mutiny of 1857.

The causes of the Mutiny are complex. All tha' was taught in schools about the complex affair, and today we remember vaguely, is something about greased cartridges at Cawnpore, the siege of Delhı and the Relief of Lucknow. And visions of people in areas, where white-skins were motive for murder. But the Mutiny was a localised affair, an uprising by the sepoys against their officers who had lost touch with their men after the arrival of their memsahibs. It was a small-scale business, sepoys asking for better conditions of living and adequate pay; they were now conscious of their power, through which the country was being governed and run. They were annoyed with the seal of the Christian missionaries, bent upon mass conversions to their Christian faith. All, Hindus and Muslims, were one on these issues. The civilians had little to do with it. Muslims in the sepoy Army had been common enough in the half-century proceeding the outbreak of 1857.

At the end of 1856 the Bengal Army was aroused with dissatisfaction, because the agents of the king of Oudh and Nana Sahib moved among the sepoys. 'A consciousness of power' writes the Commissioner of Meerut, 'had grown up in the Army which could only be exercised by mutiny and the cry of the cartridge brought the latent spirit of revolt into action.'

In Meerut on Sunday, May the 10th, three Indian regiments in the station shot their officers, broke open the gate and set off on the road to Delhi. No one stopped them, despite the fact that there were two British regiments and some artillery in the station.

The cream of the N.W.F. — North West Frontier — i.e. the Pathans Muslims took their place in the avenging 'Whether they kill the mutineers or the mutineers kill the Pathans, it will be an equal service to the state, said the British. This is about Mukarram Khan and his outlaws. Their stake was the loot involved whether the victims be Hindus or Muslims and history repeated itself in September 1947 when raiders from the same area were launched in Kashmir state against the Hindu Raja. But once again the Pathan raiders gave priority to the same stakes. In so doing they upset the local population (75% of which were Muslims) who were left with no option but to resist. And no operation of this nature can be successful without the cooperation of the local population. The Maharaja (Non-Muslim) signed accession to India which he had resisted upto now, and had signed standstill agreements both with India and Pakistan. Result ? — Indian troops were flown in and a war was fought, which only finished after the action of Beripattan in early December 1948 and a ceasefire was requested by India through Prime Minister Attlee and was agreed to by Pakistan on 14 December 1948. This may look a bit out of place here but in the story the point that I am making, shifting loyalties, faulty actions and their results — it is relevant. Explained somewhere else it would have been out of context from the story of princes of India. The method in which raiders were used permitted the Maharaja to break the standstill agreement with Pakistan and join India. We are still, living with the Kashmir problem unsolved. And, all this is history. Incidentally I was the Commander of that operation for which I was awarded the H.J. H.J. means Hilal (the new moon) -e-Jurat (Valour) : The Order of Valour.

Coming back to Jodhpur — In the second invasion in 1192, Shahabuddin Ghori in a great battle on the banks of the Jamuna at Tarain, defeated the cream of the Rajput military might. He subdued Ajmer and placed the son of the defeated Rajput Chief on the throne at the request of the famous Saint, Khawaja Mueenuddin Chishti.

The Jodhpur clan with the Raja retreated to Marwar to Mander, then the capital. In the early part of the fifteenth century Rao Rimmull, the Raja, attempted to usurp the Gaddi of the infant Sesodi Rana of Chittor (this grandson), and was slain by the child's nearest blood relation and Mander taken. One of his twenty-four sons, Jodha, finally re-established his father's kingdom and no more then 10 miles away built the fortress city of Jodhpur. From his twenty-three other sons the peers of the Rathore Rajput race trace their descent.

One can see the great rock of the Fort a few miles away from Jodhpur. It was built by Jodha on a yellow-red sandstone rock, an isolated spur of a small range of hills, in obedience to the behest of a yogi, who lived in a rocky ravine in the rocky neighbourhood. It is a stupendous affair, residing four hundred feet absolutely above the plain. At its feet lies the old walled town, with other small rocks with their fortress palaces all forming a part of the larger defence of the Rock Palace, linked with the desert on the other side.

The last time I climbed on top, 3 years ago, I saw the old cannons on the battlements. The plan of defence was simple : when attacked from Mander side, the small fortress linked by strong battlements took the first shock, supported by the cannons, from the high fort breaking the formation of the attacking enemy. The counter attack force was assembled behind the Rock Fortress Palace, on the desert side. When it was considered that the enemy had been harassed enough and was thirsty enough, the counter attack was conducted by a sweep by horse cavalry, protected by the Fort cannons and the desert. It worked most of the time but the effective defence and then the offensive depended on how soon the enemy was tired out and how long the troops could hold the siege of the town. The pivot of defence was the Rock. It was quite ingenious. But the Jaipur force did manage to reach the Rock Fort, in the scene of the battle that took place with the Chohan Kachawa Raja of Jaipur supported by the Raja of Bikaneer, against Raja Man Singh of Jodhpur, over the hand in marriage of a princess of Chittor. This force reduced Jaipur — Jodhpur, to the point of starvation — Rathore fighting Rathore, a brother fighting his elder brother. This is the history of the Indian princes which has resulted in their tragedy of 1947 and then later their complete disappearance in the 1972-disunity.

I saw the grave of a Muslim warrior near the great inner gate. The grave is conspicuous with its green shroud and incense stuck in candle stands. It is revered because this holy Muslim fought to the last with his soldiers and through his valour disheartened the Jaipur soldiers, who eventually gave up the assault with great loss. This is also an example of the tolerance and mental attitude of the rulers who have honoured their soldier, a Muslim, for the loyalty he displayed, with his life for his Raja more than two centuries back.

Last time I was there Mrs. Jacqueline Onasis Kennedy was there too. We were visiting the Fort at the same time. When signing the Visitor's Book she was before me, and beat me to what I had decided I would write — 'I have just visited the Eighth Wonder of the World !' She is a charming lady and I had also met her in Jaipur when she was staying with Her Highness the Rajmata. I wrote my bit in the Book all the same but it did not have the brevity which makes all the difference.

Jodhpur or Marwar, is the largest of the Rajputana States, about the size of Ireland. It is on the west of the Aravali Mountains on the edge of a vast desert, the Thar, ridged with long, low, isolated sand-hills. It has been ruled for the last five hundred years by a Maharaja of the noble clan of Rathore, probably one of the purest-blooded families in the world. They may not claim, or boast, quite so long a pedigree as the Sesodis of Udaipur, yet they trace their geneology clean back, in linear descent from male to male, about 1300 years. My friend Monarch, was a fine

example of this breed. And so was his son, his heir, brave fighter, and a man of convictions. When he fell in love with a lady not of his faith, which sometimes one cannot help doing that, he married her and not just used her as a concubine. It was a great tragedy, when they both died while he was piloting his twin seater plane with her. They left a boy, who also is now gone to a more peaceful abode.

I met the Monarch (Maharaja Umaed Singh Sawai) through His Highness Kashmir. H.H. Hari Singh was very fond of him. The Monarch seldom attended the Chamber meetings. I remember Mian Sarkar (H.H. Bhopal) had once asked me "Why don't you persuade your friend to come to the Chamber ?" I did try when he was in Delhi for a short visit. He used to fly in, stay a few hours and fly back. He enjoyed flying. His Highness Bhopal and he were Honourary Officers in the Airforce — Air Vice Marshals. I knew what Jodhpur's reply would be. And when approached, his reply was, "They are already too many in there, they just talk hot air, something quite impracticable. They claim to be independent and yet some cannot even leave the states without prior notice to the Resident. The big ones have not even bothered to join." He was a wise and very practical man. And one who got on with the job. I have heard from a number of people who were close to him that when there was near famine in Jodhpur because of drought he ordered a number of relief measures and gave large sums from his private purse. He had remarked that if necessary, "I will sell the jewellery but the lives must be saved." I had driven with him to his favourite 'hide-out', the boat shaped palace on a small ridge overlooking the Sardar Samand lake, 30 miles from Jodhpur, many times and all along wherever he passes, he was recognised and saluted with affection — with folded hands and at the end a wave of both hands. That always made him happy.

That small palace has not been altered. I am grateful to his grandson, Gaj, that he has left everything as he found. I remember him saying, 'My wife wanted to rearrange a few things but I asked her not to move anything. I wanted it as grandfather had arranged everything, it was his place of rest and relaxation.' It made me happy to note that my picture in Madras Cavalry full-dress was still there where it used to be, in the drawing room.

Three years ago, I was there with my friend Kanwar Mohansingh, the youngest brother of Monarch's Maharani Sahiba, a lady with a towering personality. She ruled the House. She was a Bhatti from the Jaisalmere royal family. His Highness was devoted to her. We used to pull his leg when we got a chance. All he did was to smile through his eyes.

It was the summer of 1938 and I was on long leave. The entire Jodhpur clan was in Kashmir, His Highness, his family and all the polo players and the Jodhpur horses. His Highness was residing in Guest House No. 1. After polo sometimes he used to take me back with him for what he called gup shup (gossip) but without the malicious part, in this case it was more of a friendly chitchat. That is the time when he was quite relaxed and informal. He used to have his small peg of whisky — though all drinks were offered at the club but His Highness just had fresh lime and water and had his drink at home surrounded by his family — he was very much a family man. He used to ask me all kinds of questions quite out of the ordinary, like the concept of God in Islam, why four wives were allowed and no just only one when all other customs had been reformed. He only had one wife and no 'extras', (no concubines either) not at all. The Jodhpurs were Rathore Rajputs, but never took a wife from their own clan, always an outsider — the basic sound law of breeding; go as far as you can for the high quality blood. Interbreeding is as bad in two legged animals as it is in four legged. Her Highness was a person to be reckoned with and dominated the court. I heard her once asking His Highness in Rajasthani of Jodhpur (which I understood), 'is he the one you talk

about ?' She was in strict purdah and so one was not in close scrutiny, which to me was a relief.

One day or rather evening, after polo, he was in more than his normal good form when he asked me what is the definition of a Saint in Islam ? I hadn't the foggiest idea about it so I parried the question and remember replying, 'I wouldn't know Sir, I haven't reached that stage yet, but our family is supposed to be a 'Saintly family,' He roared with laughter and said, 'I never knew that.' Neither did I till someone from the political service told me that he had read it in the India Office Library. 'Then it must be true for that is the source of all truth about us' he said sarcastically.

It must be remembered that His Highness Umaed Singh was not born an heir, he was the younger brother of the heir. And when his brother became the ruler and then died without a son, His Highness became the ruler. His late brother had one daughter who was later married by His Highness Jaipur becoming No. 2 to her own aunt, His Highness' sister. Very complicated and odd all this, but so are the corridors of the palaces, in which they were born and dwelt. One of the reasons why His Highness Umaed Singh was so normal was because of this, he had not been the prey of psychophants and durbaris from the time of his birth.

To continue with saints — I had said that saints are created by God and their own action. 'But we are all created by God' Monarch had said, 'I know but what I meant was that the stuff of which proper saints are made of is somewhere in the factories of God high above somewhere, HE or SHE we do not know, I said, what this 'Being' is. At this the Monarch looked at me with surprise but with a smile and said, 'Yes, you belong to a saintly family, all right.' I quickly chipped in, 'But not one myself Sir — far from it.' He laughed again. 'Chip of the old block anyway.'

It would not be out of place here to record that when the controversy at the marriage of Ayesha and Jai started and all kinds of malicious propaganda was initiated, it was the Monarch who took a stand that was not only in keeping with his character but also according of the traditions of his House. Jai was a friend of his and was his brother-in-law married to his sister, and son-in-law married to his niece!

Jai was keen to marry a princess of Cooch Behar, a noble House. Being a good friend of Jai's he knew his strong points and weaknesses and I know that he explained this to his sister and niece that it was better to have a noble blood going about with him instead of some Chi Chi, or a white woman of society, which he needed badly, because of the kind of the world in which he liked to move; or some other ordinary pretty thing picked up from somewhere. He was firm on one point, which had been brought to the notice of the Maharana of Udaipur (as also quoted in Travellion's conversaton with the Rana in his book — 'The India We Left.' When another leading Rajput Ruler came to ask Maharana's opinion (permission) before marrying a lady from outside Rajputana, the Maharana had replied 'your marriage is your affair but if the political department should ask me whether the son by that marriage should be treated in the line of succession, I would — say no.' The succession could only go to the son from a lady of Rajput noble blood. This law and tradition had to be maintained. And it was maintained.

The Monarch met me once in late December in New Delhi, in 1940 in Travencore House, he had come to see the Nawab of Bhopal — the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. I remember his taking me to the study, we were both alone. He had put his right arm around my waist as we walked away from His Highness Bhopal to the study, he turned and faced me and then bent against the desk with both his hands holding the top of the desk and looked at me with a smile and with a sad expression in his gaze, which I find difficult to portray and said, 'Mickey—jo

Khuda karta hai woh behtari ke leay karta hai (Mickey — is how he and His Highness Kashmir addressed me) 'whatever God does HE does for the best.' 'I am glad it is done with. What is that beautiful sheyr (couplet) that you recited to me once ?' he said. 'About disappointment Sir ?' 'Yes, that's it — Naumeedi (disappointment), please recite....' I recited :

> **Naumeedi hai buri cheese magar aik taskeen se ho jati hai.**
> *Hopelessness is a terrible thing — but,*
> *it does bring a touch of satisfaction.* *(S. A.)*

'Very good, very good, excellent...' he said — came forward put both his hands on my shoulders and said, 'let's go for a drive, I need fresh air'. 'Where shall we go ?' 'To the Durbar Polo ground Sir, where you sat watching Polo among the syces having borrowed a blanket to put over yourself more to hide your identity than from cold.' He laughed, held my right hand in his left and came into the drawing room where His Highness was enjoying his Huqa — hubble bubble smoking device, surrounded by his advisers from the Chamber of Princes. 'We are off for a drive Your Highness.' 'Will you be back for lunch ?' Bhopal asked. 'Please don't wait, we might have something at Maidens,' said Monarch. We had a very good lunch at Maidens, after our drive round the ridge. And after lunch we drove to Safdar Jung, from where he took off in his private plane for Jodhpur, piloting it himself. I think he had come to condole with me. That was Monarch, a great friend and a great gentleman. 'A bit late, but better than never Sir,' I had replied. And followed, 'Whatever HE does, HE does for the better.' He kept quiet.

Quite casually after dinner the same evening, while enjoying his Huqa and Pan (beetle nut and the leaf of a creeper) H. H. Bhopal said, 'Monarch is fond of you. Last night on the phone while discussing a point of the Chamber of Princes he had asked me where you were. I told him you were here. But he never told me he was coming and just walked in this morning.' Typical of him. I miss Monarch — will do as long as missing is possible.

To write about Jodhpur or some other rulers of Rajputana (whom I got to know) one has to write some history, of the area — Rajputana — now Rajasthan since 1947, otherwise it would be difficult to understand the character make-up of the Rulers. Like other human beings they were not identical in their habits even though they were all Rajputs (sons of king) and yet it is interesting to note that like this 'class of 'Rulers' they were all tarred with the same brush.

The Rajputs are generally supposed to have been a Scythian tribe from Central Asia. For untold generations India has been a great battlefield — everyone I know has ancestors who were invaders, it was mainly a question of when they invaded. I did not have the honour of knowing any original stock — probably the Negrites, a small dark negro-like race, resembling the Andaman Islanders. The Santals and other tribes, called Kolarians, entered India from the north-west, the ancestors of the principal native of south India, named Dravidians, came from the north-west. The two streams seem to have met each other in Central India. The Dravidians proved the stronger, broke up the Kolarians, and then went forward in a mighty body to the south.

The Aryans, from the north-west were the next invaders. Coming from a colder climate, they prided themselves upon their fair complexion, and despised the earlier inhabitants as the 'black skins.' Another name given to the aborigines was daryus, or enemies. So many of them were enslaved that the word dara was afterwards applied to a servant. One of the earlier tribes brought under subjection was called Sudras, and the name was extended to the whole race.

The war of invasion lasted for centuries. The Aryan chiefs not only fought with Daryus, but contended among themselves for mastery. Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghori was the founder of the Muslim power in India. On his death in 1206, the greater part of north-India was subject to him. Baber invaded India in 1526 and for about two centuries, the Moghul dynasty, which he founded, was the Paramount Power. There is a close connection between the history of the Moghuls and the Rajputs. Most of the sophisticated and richer states known to us would not have been as we see them today if it had not been for the patronage they received from their Moghul masters. This is the past — which cannot be altered, try as much as one may. I write this because the new books that are coming out on India and its Raj — be it Muslim Raj, Hindu Raj or British Raj are still full of attempts to alter history — facts of the past.

Even in the field of sport this practice is to be noticed. Pictures appearing in books of ladies playing Polo in Moghul days dressed in their distinctive clothes of Moghul ladies and inscriptions written in Persian and yet they are said to be Rajput ladies. If the latter ever played this game, then it was only when they married Moghuls.

Emperor Akbar has now become the son of a Hindu Rani — when his mother's name was Hamida Bano Begum (a typical Muslim name) and he was born in Sindh (Pakistan now) at a place near Umarkot; the exact spot is marked by a stone, now in the middle of a ploughed field. No one seems to give the spot importance, from a historical point of view because of prejudice against him, having attempted to stamp a new faith in his name — Deen-e-Elahi which psychophants styled 'Deen-e-Akbri.' This encouraged the fundamentalists — Hindus and Muslims — to unsheath their swords again. Even the Brahmins had by then accepted the Muslim rulers as benevolent.

The study of Deeniyat means the study of Deen, distinct code of life, and has nothing to do with the way the Muslims slaughter their animals for food, as given in some books that have come out.

And the poor Bahawalpur royal family would be horrified if they discovered that in a book about the princes which has just come out, they are the sons of Pindharis and not Arabs as they claim of pure blood from the line of the Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w.s) uncle Abbas. They style themselves Abbassis because of this distinction. I will not describe here what Pindharis have been described by various writers of history, specially British, because two Muslim ruling families, one in Rajputana and the other in Central India, take their beginnings from them. The states of Tonk in Rajputana and Jaora in Madhya Pardesh.

It is such a pity that the past is being altered. Lord Ponsonby did not hesitate when he wrote the life of Edward-VII of England to record that when Queen Victoria fell in love with the Prince Regent there was some anxiety about his background, but later the matter was cleared to the satisfaction of all.

All this was accepted with grace and the choice has proved to be a great success. Like the selection and adoption of Bernadotte, a Frenchman, as crown Prince of Sweden in 1814 whose wife was the famous Desire a French silk shopkeeper's daughter and the first girl-friend of Napoleon Bonaparte. Even if one's mother was a prostitute there is nothing one can do about it — she is still the mother and must be given due respect. Every Sultan of Turkey was a 'bastard' because the mothers' were all slave girls and the marriage was only accepted when one of them got pregnant and was moved to the special quarters of the Seragleo, the Palace, under the watchful eye of the Valideh — the Queen Mother who was, after the Sultan, the next most important person in the realm.

Such are the peculiarities of the princely order whether they be Muslims, Hindus or Christians or I am sure, anything else. That is why their lives are so interesting to read in history and must not be spoilt by 'considered improvements.'

In Islam we Muslims are told that on the Day of Judgement and Accountability, we shall be summoned by our names identified with the names of our mothers. It is such fineness that makes me happy that I was born a Muslim. Adultery is punishable by death in Islam but only if it is certified by four independent witnesses, which means, when it becomes a public scandal. Such stupidity has to be eliminated by such drastic means. A good motto — 'Care by Careful Conduct' — C.C.C : we used to joke about it.

But I was writing about the Rajputs who were, it is true, the most widespread and tenacious group. Their states were mainly in the region of Rajputana and Kathiawar, between Delhi and the Arabian Sea and some small ones between Agra to the Bay of Bengal. Agra and Delhi and later Lahore were the two twin capitals of the Moghuls and these Rajput States owe a great deal to the patronage they received from the Moghuls.

The beginning of this connection came when Humayun, Akbar's father, was driven out of the north and east by Sher Shah Suri, the great Afghan. The Rajput Chief of Chittor (Udaipur, Mewar, the middle kingdom) and Jodhpur the Marwar — the ruler who gave him refuge on his way to Sindh and from where he went to Persia. Akbar was told by his father at an early age that he must cultivate relations with Rajputs — of Rajputana area, who had helped him to escape and that he had been born in a Rajput house of Umarkot in Sindh. This did not mean of course that he was born of a Rajput lady. His mother's name was Hamida Begum. He was born at Umarkot in today's Sindh. Akbar never forgot that advice.

When he married Raja Bihari Mall of Amber's daughter in 1562 he was not only carrying out his father's wishes but also seeking alliances in the new recruiting area which he needed badly, because of constant rivalries between Turkish, Afghan and Persian chiefs of his army. Akbar proved to be the most astute politician, not so much a commander in the field, though very brave. The best commander in the field was Shahjahan, the Palace Builder, who built the Taj over his wife's grave. He is the man who subued the South — the Deccan — and kept the warring Rajputs under strict control. He had of course three-quarter Rajput blood in him, his mother was a daughter of Jodhpur (Raja Jai Singh) and his grandmother was a daughter of Raja Bihari Mall of Amber.

While I am writing history, I would like to make this observation which I find has been missed by historians, intentionally or otherwise. Akbar did not start the interaction between the Hindus and the Muslims. Interaction is something else. He kept the marriage alliances with the Rajput princesses strictly confined to the Moghul royal family. His successors did not encourage interaction either. They wanted to keep the recruiting elements of Hindu fighting class strictly confined to loyalty for the throne. There was no encouragement on the interaction or intermarriages at the lower levels. If there was one then the Brahmin community saw to it that not only the individual but his biradari (community) got excommunicated from the Hindu fold. How could Hindus and Muslims live on equal levels when this was the mental attitude of the Hindu priest who was the head of the Hindu caste system. Muslims had no caste.

The interesting study is that Akbar, who showed so much tolerance towards the Hindus and other religions, spoilt it all by his brain-wave of Deen-e-Ilahi of which he became the Head and the Soul. This was the result of the courtiers he had gathered around him, in the later years of his life, because of their own greed placed him on the pinnacle of even religion; something very sensitive to the aver-

age uneducated and ignorant Indian mind. The only man honest and loyal enough and courageous enough to speak the truth on the subject was Akbar's closest friend Mirza Man Singh of Amber (later Jaipur). When asked by the Emperor what he thought of his Deen (religion), his reply was 'Your Majesty, I know of only two religions, yours, Islam and mine Hinduism.' Akbar kept quiet and from that date went into seclusion and a few weeks later passed away, a disappointed man.

This enthusiasm of Akbar's in the field of religion had its after-effects. The Muslim fundamentalists started unsheathing their swords and the Hindus, who had accepted the Muslim benevolent rule started listening seriously again to the bigoted Hindu hierarchy that had always dreamt of Muslim extermination from Bharat Mata — the Motherland of India.

Jahangir's rebellion had shaken the stability and was the first of the many rebellions to follow. It was Mirza Man Singh who was responsible for Akbar's leniency in forgiving Jahangir. When Jahangir's eldest son rebelled, he half blinded him and kept him in a royal prison, Salimgarh, all his life. His kindness was to spare his life. But when the rebellion of the Princes took place in Shahjahan's time, the Rajput loyalty was divided. Some took the side of Dara Shikoh the eldest and favourite of Shahjahan, a literary person leaning heavily towards Sufism and Bhagti approach and some with the other three whose leader became the ablest among them, Aurangzeb, who eventually led the Muslim fundamentalists group and therefore got labelled as anti-Hindu. This was in spite of the fact that his favourite son was married to a Hindu princess who practised her Hindu rituals next to the Emperor's quarters in the palace. He is the same man who sent Raja Jaswant Singh to put down the rebellion in Afghanistan.

Chittor gave sanctuary to every rebellious royal Muslim Prince — politics. They never forgot the help that Humayun had given them when the Muslim Ahmad Shahi kings from Gujrat attacked Chittor.

They were not worried so much about Christians because they had no grass roots, but they did worry about the Muslims who had come to stay after Shahabuddin of Ghor defeated the might of the Rajputs at Tarain in 1192. And this Moghul kings policy of intermarrying with Rajput princesses was to them the end of the wedge for further interaction down the line.

The other Rajput House that had a curse about its heirs was that of Chittor—Udaipur or Mewar (the middle kingdom). This princely Rajput House was the elder branch of the Surya Vansa. The Hindus consider this House as the direct representative of Rama, from whom was descended Kanank Sen, who was the founder of this family about 144 A.D. No Indian Prince made a more prolonged resistance to the Muslims than Udaipur. The family has always boasted that they never gave a daughter to any of the Muslim Emperors. But this is not a fact. As Bernier the famous French traveller who was an astute observer of the events in the reign of Aurangzeb, record in the 'Ma-asir-i Alamgiri' it is stated that Muhammad Sultan the eldest, and Sultan Muazzam the second son, were both by the same mother, Nawab Bai; also that the mother of Muhammad Kam Bakhsh, the fifth and the last son, was Bai Udaipuri, a statement which, if correct, hardly bears out the truth of the boast of the Udaipur family that their house never gave a daughter to the Moghul Zanana. Bernier has probably confused the eldest and the youngest son, although he correctly states that Aurangzeb had two Hindu wives, daughters of Rajputs, or Rajputanis as he correctly calls them. Prince Muhammad Akbar was Aurangzeb's fourth son. His mother was a Muslim, the daughter of Shahnawaz Khan, and it was mainly on this account that Aurangzeb desired to make him his successor to the throne.



The famous Maharaja Jasvant Singh Sawai of Jodhpur immortalized by his Thadda under the walls of the Great Fort of Jodhpur 1890



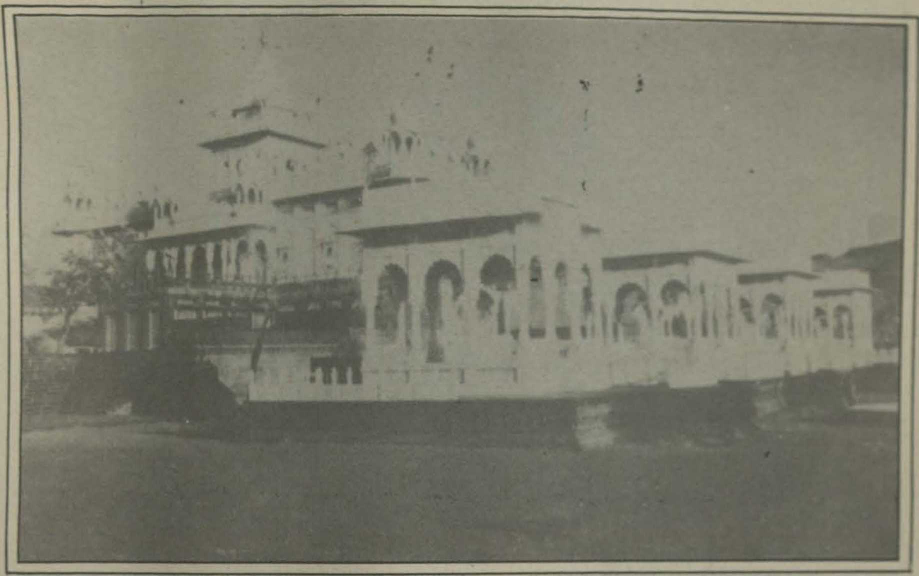
H.H. Maharaja Partap Singh of Idar (the famous Regent of Jodhpur - who on adoption became the ruler of Idar) Born in 1845 and died 1922



A Caricature of Sir Partap Singh 'Sir P' by 'Spy'



Jodhpur Fort, on a 400 - Foot Hill. Towering over the city of Jodhpur



The Chatries of the Rulers of Jodhpur at the Thadda of Maharaja Jasvant Singh



H.H. Maharaja Umaed Singh 'Monarch' of Jodhpur



H.H. Jodhpur 'the Monarch' with his brother and children and the machine he loved to fly in

1 Maharaj Kumar Hanvat Singh
2 Maharaj Kumar Himat Singh
3 Banna Kishan Singh
4 Dr Bijay Kishan
5 Rao Raja Narpat Singh
6 The Monarch
7 Maharaj Ajit Singh



The Jodhpur polo team in London



In Srinagar 1938 with Mohan - Jagat and H.H. Jodhpur



Tuning up for the next day Mohan - Hanut (Soda) - Self Hanut (R.R.) - Prem

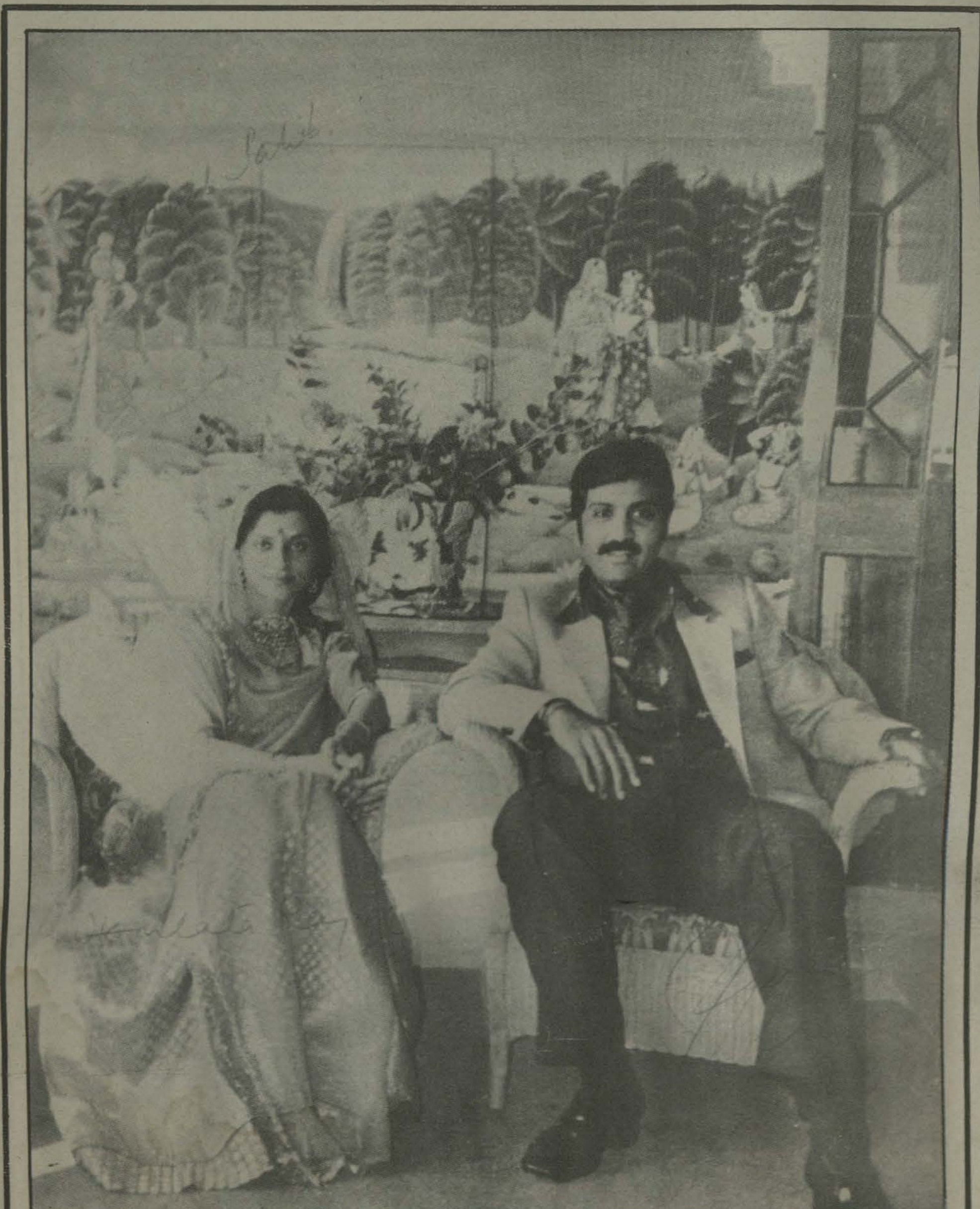


H. Highness the Maharaja of Jodhpur conducting H. R. H the Prince of wales to the Durbar Hall.



H. R. H. being received by the Regant of Jodhpur H. H. Sir Pertab Singh the famous Sir 'P'.





Their Highness the present Maharaja and Maharani of Jodhpur

At the partition in 1947 the Rana of Udaipur was supposed to be the first Ruler to join the new Paramount Power, Indian Union. As he was with the British when he signed a treaty of 'submission', to rid himself of the Marhattas who were levying 'Chauth' (one-fourth) on all the Rajput Princes, as a punishment for not coming to their aid against Ahmed Shah Abdali at Panipat in 1761.

This is proving the historical fact that certain elements of Hindus have never been prepared to accept interaction with the Muslims in spite of Akbar's efforts. They, the Udaipur Ranas, gave shelter to Moghul Princes when they rebelled against the central Authority at Agra or Delhi to increase the dissension. They kept themselves and their subjects as isolated as possible for they were astute enough to foresee that any rule that is based on troop strength cannot last for very long. One has to have grass roots. Akbar had crushed the Udaipur Rana completely at Chitor, after which the capital was shifted to Udaipur. He himself was not keen on marriages in that House in order to keep the Rana isolated. He had marriage alliance with Kachawas of Jaipur, with Rathores of Jodhpur and Bikaner, and others surrounding the central state of Udaipur. But they were always keen to impress the Ranas. There is an amusing tale to illustrate this, related to me by a learned personality, Sir Abdul Samad Khan 'Chief Sahib', Chief Minister of Rampur It goes like this :

Jahangir was on his way to Kashmir for the summer and at that time the Rana's heir was one of the Rajput princes attending him, as was the custom. The journey from Lahore took 15 to 20 days depending on both the mood of the weather and the Emperor and whether he stopped to shoot and hunt on the way for long or not. He used to hunt rhinoceros in the jungles of Pabbi hills which today (1988) look like ant hills because of the tree cutting, without replacement, since those days of stability and sound rulers.

Every day before resuming his march, covering an average of 12 miles a day, he gave public audience — Darshan (appearance) an old practice to assure everyone that he was hail and hearty. Jahangir dressed himself up lavishly for this occasion. In the raised pavillions he was always attended by the native princes on duty. His route was through Bhimbar, Rajori, the Pirpanjal range was crossed by Banihal Pass. As a matter of interest I have done that journey myself once; enjoyed it very much and was able to let my imagination run wild, how the government in those areas was organized — how they moved, Jahangir and Noor Jahan (his Empress), both fond of hunting and have recorded how much they enjoyed the actual journey. At the end of the Darshan (appearance) he used to change to travelling clothes and then proceed after disposing of urgent state work. After the first audience he asked the Rana's son to come into the private room and asked him what impressed him most at the Darshan. The young man of 17 - 18 said, 'Your magnificent dress, Your Majesty.' Jahangir smiled and said nothing and the prince was dismissed. In the evening a present arrived from the Emperor for the prince. It was the dress he had admired so much. The prince was delighted. The second day, the same thing happened and so it happened on every day, the same question was asked and the same reply was given. The Udaipur courtiers attending the prince were getting anxious by now. They told the prince that his father would be furious for his accepting so much and degrading himself. So a plan was devised. At the next audience the prince was to inform the Emperor that a courtier had arrived to say that the Rana, his father, was unwell. The Emperor took the news with an amused smile. The Emperor employed very good intelligence. The Emperor said nothing except that he hoped it was nothing serious. By this time they had reached the camp from where the Pass was to be got over. After the audience the prince did his Zaminbosi (kissing the ground) and with folded hands begged the Emperor

to let him go as another courtier had arrived. The Emperor smiled and said, 'I know. Well if you want to go I won't stop you, but I had made up my mind that if you had given the same reply to my question you were to receive the regalia till we completed the journey to Srinagar.'

So the prince departed after collecting several gorgeous dresses studded with stones of high quality. Apparently he wore different stone ornaments every day — diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and so on, to match the colour of the brocade dress he wore. This was Jahangir who showed this kind of generosity, even exceeding his father's. Now a comparison with his grandson.

Emperor Aurangzeb having established himself on the Peacock throne, built by his father, Shahjahan, who was still alive, and after winning the battle of succession with his three brothers, was feeling the pinch of conscience, the pious person that he was, for having made the father his prisoner, in the Palace at Agra. So he let the word go round that if anyone could get him the pardon of his father in writing, he would do him the honour that no Emperor in the world had done yet. So the nobelmen at the court go busy. The old man, Shahjahan, was adamant at first but one of them believing in his motto of 'perseverance commmands success', managed to wear the old man down and got the Emperor Shahjahan to put his royal seal to the document of forgiveness.

This courtier then informed the Minister-in-Waiting, to inform Emperor Aurangzeb that he had procured the pardon and when could he present it ? He was soon informed that he would be presenting it at a public Darbar in the Dewan-e-Aam (Public audience hall) in front of the whole court and the public. The procedure was explained to him. He would be conducted from the farthest steps to the great hall and beyond, where he would take his shoes off and then walk to the throne where he would have the unique honour of presenting the document himself to the Emperor, who would have taken his position before his arrival on the scene.

The day arrived and the whole arena was specially decorated, royal banners were waving in the air from their silken and golden staffs. The royal kettle drums and trumpets and Shehnais (flutes) were lined up on their decorated elephants. This noble was mounted on a royal elephant and arrival in state to the spot earmarked where the elephant bowed and then sat to let him get down from the gold howdah. He was accompanied by the Lord Chamberlain.

The Emperor took his seat before the elephant came into position. And then the drum beat was heard and the trumpets sounded and the Shehani was played. The elephant, bowed to the Emperor in the distance on the Peacock throne and then sat with dignity to allow the honoured guest to alight.

The Lord Chamberlain led him to the carpet where the shoes were taken off and led him along the long carpet runner which entered the great hall and led to the royal area just below the balcony of the throne in which no one was allowed except the princes of royal blood. Lord Chamberlain and the noble, holding the parchment in his right hand enclosed in a brocade cover then stood in front of the throne and kissed the ground. At this moment the Emperor rose and came down the marble and golden balcony to the royal enclosure below and stood before the noble, who then with a deep bow presented the parchment.

The Emperor unrolled the parchment and read what was written with care. His face brightened at the sight of the Royal seal. A smile came to his face. He handed the parchment to the Lord Chamberlain and himself advanced and embraced the nobleman, and kissed him on both cheeks. He stepped back a bit and looked in the distance where the elephant was still sitting. The Emperor then broke the silence, 'I am grateful to you', he paused and looked to where the nobleman had

taken his shoes off and spoke, 'Come with me', they both walked slowly all along the line to where the shoes were. By ths time someone had turned them to face outwards, ready for the feet to slip in. On reaching the spot, the Emperor picked up the shoes and said, 'These must have been the slippers that took you to my father' and then put them on the gound and indicated that he should put them on which the nobleman did, in a daze, and followed the next gesture from the Emperor indicating him to mount the elephant, which he did with shaking legs. The Lord Chamberlain who was now in attendance on the Emperor, then indicated to the Mahawat to proceed, which he did. The elephant got up, turned and went down to his knee to salaam the Emperor who stood there motionless, till the elephant got up, turned and moved away.

The Emperor also turned to walk back to the end of the hall and then through the rear back entrance to the Royal apartments. The audience had seen what they would never see again. Did the princes draw any lesson from this gesture ? I wonder. All that the Emperor said after all this drama, after reaching his study overlooking the river Jamuna, when he threw his royal robe on the Divan was, 'Thats that.' And turned to the Lord Chamberlain, 'Check it and lock it up.' The Lord Chamberlain did his kornish (three deep salaams) and left the Chamber, walking backwards all the way and very nearly fell on his face when he missed the step, dazed at what he had just witnessed.

This was Aurangzeb. And his ways of doing things.

The reader can draw his own conclusion about the two Emperors and the character make-up of Jahangir (the subduer of the world) and Aurangzeb Alamgir (the ruler of the world).

How far all this is true, only God knows, but I have put it here because it is a good story and was told by a charming person whom I love and respect.

Sometimes the spread of the Marhattas after the decline of the Moghul Empire is not given due importance; it gave rise to a number of factors that affected the princes of India. And particularly the princes of Rajasthan.

During the first centuries of the Christian era the Marhattas enjoyed considerable prosperity in their area, with Poona at the centre, under a number of petty Chiefs. They submitted with little resistance, to the first Muslim invasion. In 1657 Shivaji, the hero of Marhatta story rebelled against the Muslim kings of Bijapur, whose servant he was. He and his soldiers were of humble caste though his ministers were Brahmins. Before Shivaji died he had shaken the Muslim yoke in the south. But Shivaji's grandson who succeeded him as the leader of the state he had formed and was brought up at the Moghul court turned out to be a feeble person and was a puppet in the hands of his Brahmin minister, the Peshwa, who eventually threatened Delhi — succeeded in establishing the right of 'Chauth' (one fourth) of the revenue of the state over the whole of Deccan. The office of the Peshwa became hereditary and grew in importance with the growth of the Marhattas kingdom, the kings sinking into obscurity. Before 1760 the Marhattas had overran Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the various chiefs had secured different parts of the Moghul Empire. Scindhia ruled over a long stretch of territory south of Agra and Delhi, Holkar the uplands of Malwa and Gaekwar the Rajput plains of Gujrat and the north of Bombay. All these states acknowledged the Peshwa (a Brahmin) at Poona, as the head of the Marhatta confederation, which finally secured a large proportion of India and became the largest Empire ever founded by a Hindu race.

The first check came when the Afghan, Ahmed Shah Abdali, invaded and completely crushed them at Panipat in 1761 (the same year in which the American Civil War started). The Rajputs refused to aid them in this battle and the Marhattas never forgave them for this and extracted 'chauth' and overran Rajputana reducing

it to ruins till the British arrived and put an end to the Marhatta Confederation. Wellesley gave a crushing blow beautifully executed by throwing a net around them and then defeating them in detail by convincing diplomacy and supreme military show of strength in the battle. Both the Wellesley brothers excelled in this war, the Marhatta war and younger Wellesley won the battle of Assaye which according to him was 'his best battle — five thousand disciplined native troops against ninety-six thousand Marhatta cavalry and infantry.' This is mentioned here because my ancestors were on the side of the British who gave them Pataudi for their valour — and confirmed an area of over 2000 square miles next to and around Delhi which they had conquered and held. And when I joined the 1st Punjab Regiment, I was to note that the senior battle honour of 1st. Punjab was Assaye and the mascot of the Regiment was the elephant of Assaye. The dragon of China came later.

The havoc caused by the Marhattas must have been devastating for the Rana of Udaipur to be in a hurry to sign the Treaty of Submission with the Chiristian, alien, white faced British. This treaty was always to him by the visiting British dignitaries to the State. This state was the first to sign with the Indian Union in 1947 and the Rana became the Mahraj Promukh of Rajasthan with the Rajpromukh under him, at Jaipur.

Jaipur was selected as the capital of Rajasthan State (to the misery of the old Jaipurians now). The main consideration was the accommodation of the Man Guard barracks for the secretariat and the other houses of the dignitaries which could be acquired or requisitioned for the staff of the states civilian bureaucracy. As a result of this, gone is the old Pink City with its various Agra, Delhi, Ajmer gates leading out of the city planned by Jai Singh Sawai II, whose statue stand near Rambagh turning exactly 180 degrees to the south of the temple on the hill between Nahargarh and Jaigarh.

The rulers of Jaipur who have always fascinated me have been three. The great Mirza Man Singh I, the great astronomer Jai Singh II and the great Artist Ram Singh Sawai.

The first through the influence at the court amassed wealth and built in Amber what is to be seen today, even after the white-wash plaster with which he had to cover the beautiful carvings and paintings, when Jahangir sent his special team to see what was going on in Amber, being jealous of the Mirza from the very beginning being the son of his aunt and the husband of his sister; he had always envied Mirza's position at the court. This jealousy was one of the seeds of the rebellion of Jahangir's eldest son, the nephew of Mirza Man Singh. The rebellion failed, and the prince was semi-blinded and placed under palace arrest in Salimagarh and eventually Shahjahan the third son succeeded, who was married to the niece of the Empress Nur Jahan, Jahangir's favourite wife and sister of Asaf Khan the Prime Minsiter and father of Mumtaz Mahal, the lady who sleeps in the Taj.

Talking of Taj I must relate what Louis Rousealtet the eminent author and traveller had to say about Raja Ram Singh at the Imperial Durbar at Agra in 1866. Sir John Lawrence, of 1857 Mutiny fame, was appointed the Governor General and Viceroy and was holding his first Durbar at Agra, no more as a servant of English merchants, but as the personal representative of the Queen of England, Empress of India. The festivities stated on the 11 November 1866, when the Viceroy entered Agra in state, surrounded by brilliant staff, and was greeted with a salute of guns from the old citadel of Akbar. He himself was dressed in the simplest of plain clothes. But on the 13th November he was dressed with difficulty in the formal dress of silk breeches, tall stockings, and black pumps when he received the princes who were entitled to the call.

On the 15th the Maharaja gave a big dinner and dance at the Taj Gardens; the thought of sacrilege in converting a tomb which was one of the greatest monuments of India, into a place of amusement never entered the thoughts of anyone. Even though the Mutiny was 9 years old then, the Muslims still had to be told that the Muslim Moghul no longer ruled. And the municipality of Agra had no hesitation at placing the whole Taj at his disposal. He, Louis Rousealtet reports, 'There were Maharajas and Rajas sparkling with diamonds, Governors, diplomats and officers covered with embroidery....Rajput chiefs; and the great ladies of the Court of Calcutta.... The powerful Ram Singh of Jaipur was there, appearing somewhat confused at having to give place to the ladies, and not a little astonished at the unceremonious elbowing of the people near him : but he took it all in good part.' He must have been a charming man, unassuming. No wonder he took photographs of his wives and Zanana with restraints of Purdah. And had a theatre in his palace where Shakespearian plays were performed.

The political portion of this grand festival at Agra terminated with the Durbar, but festivities continued until the end of the month of November 1866 : the natives loved a Tamasha ! The enlightened Ram Singh gave a ball and this prince, the descendant of Rama, was seen figuring in a quadrille with an English lady on his arms ! His grandson, Man Singh II was to improve on that and did the Fox-trot and Tango. He became the moderniser of Jaipur.

I remember asking my friend the Monarch (Maharaja Umaed Singh Sawai of Jodhpur) where his ancestors were then. His remark was typical, 'Riding camels in the desert on their way to Jaisalmere.' 'Why there Sir'? 'Mickey don't you know Her Highness comes from there....' He said with his normal twinkle in his eyes and smile on his lips and an affectionate pat on my shoulder.

This was the Ruler of Marwar (meaning the region of death), Jodhpur, by far the largest of the Rajputana States with an area of 37,000 square miles. A large portion of the State was desert. The Maharaja, Chief of the Rathore Clan of Rajputs, claims to belong to the Surya Vansa, descended from Rama. It is claimed that in 1194 after the defeat by the Muslim armies, Shivaji, the grandson of 1st Rathore king of Kanauj entered Marwar, and agreed to settle there. But it was not till about 1382 that Mander, then the capital of Marwar, was acquired by the Rathores. In 1561 Marwar was conquered by Akbar. After the Moghuls it was overrun by Marhattas. Scindhia levied Chauth, one-fourth of the revenue tax as tribute. In 1818 Jodhpur was taken under the protection of the British Government.

The thing that struck me most after the Fort at Jodhpur was the Jaswant Memorial or the Jaswant Thadaa, a colossal marble building standing on a hill beside the Fort. After the cremation of Maharaja Jaswant Singh, it became the Royal crematory. My friend Monarch's Chatri is there too and beside him his brave son's, who died so young in a plane accident. Inside the Thadaa is an interesting array of pictures of the Rulers of Jodhpur.

Maharaja Jaswant Singh was a picturesque personality with a turned off flowing beard, a turban typical of Jodhpur, a long string affair which looks so attractive when tied properly. Jodhpur had a very illustrious Prime Minister, known to the world, particularly the British as 'Sir P'. He was a soldier prince. He was the Commandant of the Imperial Cadet Corps at Dehra Dun at the beginning of the 20th century, where my father was given training in 1907-8. In 1911, at the Durbar in Delhi in which King George the Fifth announced New Delhi as the capital once again of India, Sir P. was attending him as his senior A.D.C. He went to Flanders in 1914 and when the then Prince of Wales (Edward VIII) got wounded, wrapped him in his overcoat; exposing himself to extreme cold and accompanied him all the way back to delivering him to his parents.

It is after his style that the present form of breeches are known as Jodhpurs. He wore straight Pyjamas, as we do, even today, with our kurtas (collarless, long loose-sleeved shirt). For riding he merely put the patch where the cloth touched the saddle. With time this string round the waist was replaced by a belt with a buckel and the opening in front was buttoned. The fancy butterfly sides came much later.

He was a great horseman and built a famous polo team with his two sons Hanut and Abbey in it.

The Monarch was trained by him too and used to relate stories of how he used to yell at them if they were slow. It is Sir P, who asked Monarch to build a palace, 'We need a palace befitting our state in the 20th century.' The present Umaed Palace is the outcome. Built from the finest marble and white stone from Makran quarries, the ones that supplied the hard white marble for the Taj at Agra at the request to his maternal grandfather of Jodhpur by Emperor Shahjahan. The Maharaja of Jaipur gave the land, the garden and camping ground of Mirza Man Singh Sawai, adjoining the Royal Palace and Fort, for the Mausoleum that, today, is one of the wonders of the world.

Anyone who has seen the Viceroy's Palace in New Delhi must have noticed the Jaipur Column with the Star of India on top of it. It is to demonstrate the apprecia-tion to the House of Jaipur for the gesture of giving all that land where New Delhi stands in majesty; that also belonged to Mirza Man Singh Sawai. Jaipurs were compensated by giving them the land of three villages in Hariana, which are still their property.

The Fort of Jodhpur is a magnificent sight, to me the Eighth Wonder of the World.

It guarded the city, which clustered round it and was built by Rao Jodha in 1550. It was surrounded by a strong faseel-fort like strong wall with ramparts in it, and used to have 70 gates. When the foundations of the wall were laid, a man was buried alive as an auspicious omen. Poor man! I wonder how the draw was done. But then human life is still so cheap in our part of the world. But this man's descendants received a land grant. I hope they still have it. About 9 kilometers away are the ruins of Mander, the ancient capital. There are some lovely monu-ments of Chatris (cenotaphs) of past rulers there in a garden, which is very well kept.

From the highest mountain ranges in the world to the desert sands of Marwar (India) and Cholistan (Pakistan) stands the association of Jodhpur princes.

The variety of landscape and people may help some to understand, why when they came to India or to Pakistan or Bangladesh, they find themselves confused with this mass of humanity moving about like ants, in temperatures that vary from snow to oven-like heat. Speaking different languages in different parts. That is the beauty and the charm of this vast Peg in the ocean of the east.

It was also necessary to keep this mosaic pattern of inhabitants in this country with changing geographical features and colours, changing with sunrise on snow tops and sunsets on the rivers and lakes always before one when relating the story of these Indian princes.

Hari Singh, Maharaja of Kashmir, was fully aware of the beauty and the complexity of his domain. It is mentioned here to again illustrate the interlinking and the complexities of their relationship.

It is here in the domain of a Dogra Raja that I met the Rathore Raja of Marwar. I first met my friend Monarch in this beautiful vale of Kashmir. He was very friendly with His Highness Kashmir. Some of his countrymen, from the deserts of Jodhpur, were employed in Kashmir service. One of the ADC's, Jagat, was from there. It is

there that I first met Maharaja Kishen Singh, father of Prem, the distinguished Polo player. It is also in Sringagar that I learnt real Polo in the company of the Jodhpur Boys — Rao Raja Hanut Singh and Rao Raja Abbey Singh, sons of Maharaja Partap Singh the famous 'Sir P'. Hanut Soda another player of distinction. And of course my friend Mohan Singhji, the brother-in-law of Monarch — the Maharani Sahiba's brother.

The Maharaja of Jodhpur could produce two Polo teams, because His Highness himself played a stalwart game, rated as he was then at six goals. Thakur Sahib of Rohet, form Jodhpur, rated at (6) six goals, played for Kashmir. Uncle Mehboob (Nawab Khusrojung) also six goal rating and Jagat and self and His Highness fielded the Kashmir side. The Kashmir Bodyguard produced a useful side; Phulal and others. Phulal had become the ADC, so got better horses from the Royal stables. In 1955 when we took a team from Pakistan to India he was commanding the 61st Cavalry at Jaipur, the only horsed cavalry, which provided the riders and horses, when needed, for units like the Presidents Bodyguard. Now there are only two squadrons. The Polo grounds on which we played are no longer there — built over by some buildings to house the ever increasing population.

I learnt so much by playing with this elites Polo crowd. The game was much faster. I played for my Regiment in Bolaram, Sikanderabad and Hyderabad, but when I came for the summer to Kashmir, I found that I was beaten on the strike by hook or a ride off; by that fraction of a second which makes all the difference. One had to be much quicker on strike.

It was such fun. Not only the game, but the company of the people who played this game and did little else. It was not like us who worked at our profession and in our spare time played this noble game. Their life, their hobby and even their profession was this game. So to compete with them was not easy. But that company for a couple of months or more, was enough to keep one going and upto the mark till we met again on the most beautiful and perfect ground in the world.

One was privileged to ride, perhaps the best horses that any stable could produce anywhere. I was light and had good hands and was therefore fortunate to be allowed to ride His Highness' own string of select Polo ponies. In fact when he was playing himself, I had to warm them up (in fact to calm them down) for him. This was very fortunate as I got his second string to play. And some of them were super top-class ponies which His Highness sometimes found a bit of a handful. Horses like 'Wardinia', 'Brown Sherry', 'Tuesday', 'Ripple', 'Grey Dawn', 'Maitland', etc. etc.

Every week there was a tournament. There used to be quite a problem about it. The Jodhpur sides were strong, very strong and played as a team. The Monarch always played with one of his sides. This meant that his side could never be beaten in spite of the superiority of our horses. His Highness Kashmir was a sport but liked to win in his own domain where his subjects were watching him and cheering him and expected him to win. It was this problem and the solving of it that was the meeting ground and the forge, where we hammered out the solution that forged the friendship between His Highness Jodhpur and myself.

His Highness Palanpur, another dear friend of His Highness Kashmir had arrived and was installed in the beautiful bungalow, named after him, Taley Manzil. A Polo tournament was to be organized in his honour. I (Mickey) was summoned, one morning, after breakfast and was 'commanded' to organise it carefully, (there was a stress on care!) and show the teams formed to His Highness at the earliest.

It was a task that needed all the diplomatic talent that I possessed. I knew what to do; having been born, by an accident, in this same fraternity, I sat in my two-seater red car and made my way to No. 1 Guest House where His Higness 'J'

(Birajing) was staying. I found him relaxing under a Chinar tree, watching the Jhelum passing by the Guest House, on its way to the plains of the Punjab (five waters), at its leisurely pace. He saw me as I went up the steps, got up and greeted me with both hands out-stretched — he was the politest and most gracious and well-mannered prince I knew.

"What's up Mickey? What brings you here at this time?"

"Sir, I want your blessings and assistance at the making of teams for the tournament that is to start next Tuesday for Palanpur Cup."

'Is there such a Cup?' 'Well I think there will be Sir', I told Monarch. 'Then we have to ensure that His Highness Kashmir plays and wins.' He said with a wink. 'I don't think it will be such a problem Mickey. We are all Riastees (from the states)', he said with a chuckle.

His Highness Jodhpur was the person who had told me once that every ruling prince whom we found normal, should be considered a saint. The forces of sycho-phancy that surrounded all the princes, big or small, were such that it could easily turn the head of an average person. How correct his observation was. So this charming prince sat down with a pencil and paper and made four balanced sides. After he had finished, coffee was served and his children gathered around him, he was very much a family man. I took leave. I had a lot to do, to get His Highness Kashmir to agree to those sides. 'Don't worry about this problem. My boys know how to lose with dignity. Go and do your stuff.' So I bowed and took leave from this noble gentleman.

The tournament was played. There were some good galloping games, and somehow His Highness Kashmir could not lose. There was a prize for everyone who took part, including the umpires and the referee. This is how Polo was played by the princes in their states. And this is how friendships were formed, and forged. This is how I got to know, admire and love Monarch. He was always considerate, very human and very humble

My friend, Monarch, His Highness Sawai Umaed Singhji Sahib Bahadur of Jodh-pur, was a serious minded person and devoted his time first to the state and then to other things. He was a six goal Polo player, devoted to pig-sticking. He went for tigers and panthers on foot. But later he gave up the killing and took to shooting them with a movie camera. He showed us some lovely shots of his safari in Kenya. Later his 'love' became flying. He was an expert pilot and went visiting his friends, in different states, in his aircraft.

Her Highness, the only Maharani of Jodhpur, ruled the palace. She observed strictest purdah, therefore, being invisible to everyone except her own family. Wherever Monarch went, she went. She drove in a purdah car of black glass windows so that nobody could see inside, stepped out of it veiled, climbed into the plane and both of them would be off by themselves into the skies. He encouraged people to fly. He was, certainly, an excellent pilot. There was nothing about the plane that he did not know.

He was very conscious about his heritage but never bragged about it. The Maharaja of Jodhpur was the paramount chief of the Rathore Rajputs, whose origin is lost in legend. According to Tod, in his Chronicle of Rajputana, the first of the Rathores grew from the splintered spine of the goddness Indra. But other genealogists trace their descent from the second son of divine Rama, King of Ayodhia. So, like the Sesodias of Mewar (Chitore — Udaipur), they are children of the Sun and of the highest tree among Rajputs. 'It is true', I heard Monarch say, 'the greatest of crimes to the Rajputs is forgetfulness of favours.'

I remember his speaking once of Sir Partap Singh (the famous Sir 'P') who was Regent of Jodhpur for many years and later became Maharaja of Idar State

(Gujrat), how stern he was with him in the riding school and on the Polo ground. He held him in great reverence. He told his story with great amusement when the heroic Jodhpur Lancers came home at the end of the First World War. They were greeted by Sir 'P' with the grim question, 'Why are you not dead?' Then he enlarged, 'a soldier's death, wherever won, was the best and the greatest gift of life.' I have had a personal association with Jodhpur Lancers (the Sardar Rissala). When going to the War, I gave my brake of four-in-hand to this Rissala as a present in Rissalpur (now in Pakistan) in 1940.

There is another story about this great character Sir 'P' — about a young British Officer who died in Sir P's house. The body of a Christian meant the worst pollution, but Sir 'P' would not let the sweepers touch it. He carried it himself to the bier. Within an hour Brahmins were at his gate, clamouring against such breach of caste. Sir 'P' took no notice and retorted : 'Between the soldiers there is no caste except that of a comrade.' Whether it is a true story one does not know. But as it is a good one, it is here.

The princes, as we knew them, were the product of the Moghul period — the creation of the House of Taimur. They took their identity as we knew it, after the final fall of that illustrious house in 1857 and upto the Partition in 1947. They would have not been in the numbers they were if it had not been for the intervention of Queen Victoria in 1858. She became their mother-guardian when she declared herself the Empress (in 1877) that gave the lustre and the sparkle to that jewel. The British — the Paramount Power — ruled them de facto from 20 September 1857 when Hudson hoisted the Union Jack on the rampart of the Lahori Gate of the Red Fort in Delhi. They did it with a hidden but a firm hand. They had their Residents and Agents throughout princely India. Their 'advice' had to be accepted or they soon got someone else who was more prompt in accepting it. They left them more or less free, to do what they liked, in their beautiful, spacious and in some cases vast 'cages.' Soon they developed the mentality of the caged. When they were let out, or came out, their reactions were fascinating and some went wild and had to be restrained, some blinked and didn't know what to do with themselves on their large 'Reserves'. As far as the Paramount Power was concerned they were protected treasures. When one understood 'the system' a bit, one soon found out that they were there because it suited the Paramount Power. They ran their states, within the overall policy of the Paramount Power in the country as a whole, having no direct contacts with any power outside their states. This point of suitability was clearly proven in the manner that the Paramount Power dealt with them in the end.

On the mid-night of 14/15 August 1947, they were told that they were independent and could do what they wished — join with India or Pakistan or remain independent, if they could. The whole thing was a farce, and some of us who had a peep into the corridors of power used to pity these princely birds. They were to be let out of their cages to go where they wished. There is no need to enlarge on this point any further because most of us have seen the face at some time or the other — or the expression on the face of a caged animal when let out. Having taken no active part in the struggle for independence or freedom themselves, they were withdrawn; the protection of the Paramount Power which dissolved itself into oblivion, leaving these special people who were supposed to have direct links and protection as the children of Queen Victoria — the Crown — the Paramount Power. They were let out into Gladiators Arena by no other than a grand-child of her's, through a daughter. Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1877.

The story that I am trying to write is about some of these, beautiful, exalted, charming, protected and preserved people. I cannot write of their political achievements because they were too 'protected' to be allowed in this dangerous arena. But in the fields in which they had their freedom, they were second to none and some of them excelled in their particular subjects. Some of them were great administrators and statesmen, and it was a tragedy that their talent was not utilized in the service of their country. They patronized arts of all kinds. They loved sport, most of them anyway, and some of them reached international class in their own field. I found them by-and-large kind and gracious people. But I found them shy, if not hesitant, in the crowd. Many a times, the biggest of them, would hesitate on a race course or on a Polo ground and even on a Parade ground, that momentary hesitation that comes to all actors for lack of being used to a particular hall or a stage. Some of them were celebrities. Some of them were great stars in their own fields. But they got butterflies in their stomach too! It was most amusing to a person like me to observe their tact, being asked, 'You go first', or 'I'll stay here you go and do it.' It happened on a number of occasions to even 21 gunners and that's what I enjoyed — they were human. When they trusted you and took off their protective armour, they were the most human people and so fair. They could be very generous and very good, but some of them were so tight fisted, that it is unbelieveable. You couldn't get a pice out of them if you asked. But you could swindle them of lacs (100,000). And they weren't so naive not to know what was going on. It proved that they wanted to give you but just couldn't open their hand. It is a fascinating study. I paid a few rupees here and there when they were fumbling in their pockets. I got no cash back. But I got a Polo pony or a car! But usually it was the gold watches and sometime the same one because it used to go back to Hamilton or Cook & Kelvey's — to come back again! They were gracious enough not to mark the watch — they knew what went on — they were wonderful people.

It is the same man, this great friend of mine, who in February 1938, at the Durbar Polo grounds, when Jaipur and Bhopal met in the finals performed this gesture! I was watching from the embankment side from the Box of H.E'.s sitting near His Highness 'K' when an A.D.C, brought me a slip of paper 'I am here Mickey'. I got up and asked where the man was who brought the message. I recognised him and he asked me to follow him. We had to walk along the bank and then behind the goal posts on the right handside, to a place where some syces (grooms) were sitting. The man from behind, pointed out to a figure sitting on the ground with a blanket covering him. When I got close, I recognised him, it was Monarch. He must have watched me coming because the moment I got near he stretched out his hand, indicating to me to sit on his right on the ground. He put his hand on my left shoulder, a thing he often did. I asked, 'What are you doing here, Your Highness?' 'Watching Polo and watching you hobnobbing with the big shots....' He always pulled my leg. I said, 'Sir you must come there, His Highness will never forgive me for not bringing you to him.' 'I am not here, as far as he is concerned, you handle him after I have gone.'

"Where are you going?"

"Back to my home where I came from, I have to take off before dark..."

At this moment an accident took place, the Maharaja of Jaipur's horse stumbled while turning and he fell on his shoulder. First-aid arrived, but they suspected a fracture so he couldn't play and was replaced by a stand-by, Amar Singh, who was a 6 goal player. His Highness Jaipur was 9. It was the beginning of the fifth Chukkar so there were 1-1/2 Chukkars to go.

The game was even at that stage. The Jaipurs had their usual side — Prithi, Abbey, Hanut and His Highness. The Bhopal had Hasketh Hughes and Gerald Balding playing for him.

The handicaps didn't matter because it was open.

The Monarch waited till the end of the 5th Chukkar and then got up, "It's not the same game now — Bhopal will win. I am off..." It was no use persuading him to stay, I knew him well. I walked with him to his car, made my salaam, and he embraced me as usual, patted me on the shoulder and said Khuda Hafiz (God be with you). He sat near the driver, I closed the door and watched this prince of the desert, a 6 goal Polo player himself drive away to the airport — Safdarjung, to fly his own plane back to that famous place in the desert, called Jodhpur. It was his ancestor who had sent the hard marble from the quarries for the Taj, to his son-in-law, the Emperor Shahjahan to build the Taj Mahal.

These deserts produced some wonderful people — Princes like him and Prophets of three of the greatest faiths in the world. No wonder I like the desert. No wonder I sit here writing all this in the midst of a desert.

He was the brother-in-law of Jaipur, in fact double brother-in-law. No. 1 Maharani of Jaipur was his sister and the No. 2 was his niece — his elder brother's only child, which made him the ruler on his demise.

Jai's brother-in-law, Bhaiya Cooch Behar was the elder brother of his No. 3 wife — Gayetri Devi (Ayesha).

Both these individuals were my dearest friends and it is perhaps for this reason that I knew so much of the palace and zanana affairs of these three states — Jodhpur, Jaipur and Cooch Behar. And of course Kashmir and Bhopal and a few others so intimately.

A friend of mine who had read my book 'The Quest' asked me, where is Kalan Mahal now, where your ancestors lived in Delhi. I looked at her with some amusement, for obviously she had not read the account of the Mutiny 'The Ghadar' with much care. I had taken a lot of trouble over that chapter, to make it as authentic as I could. I replied, "Gone with the wind, like so many other things that were in Delhi." This friend was associated with Rajasthan where the sand and the scrub had given shelter to the castles that had come up, in most cases, through the patronage of their alliances with the Moghuls at Delhi.

A number of people have asked me why there were no stately homes of the Muslim nobles in and around Delhi. They were rather surprised when I told them that the Moghul rule was a Military rule. Everthing belonged to the king — who was the proprietor of all land and the source of all honour. The attitude of the Moghul Emperor was in some ways similar to that of Emperor (Czar) Paul of Russia, 'the only man noble in my dominion is the man to whom I speak, for the time I speak to him'. By this policy they succeeded in breaking up, in India, all the ancient aristocracy except of the Rajputs. Now this statement requires to be explained.

After the defeat of Humayun at the hands of Sher Shah Suri (1540-45) there was a break in the Moghul rule which lasted till 1555 — Salim Shah and other Sur kings. The second battle of Panipat was fought in 1556. Humayun had advised his young son to make alliances with the Rajputs, who had given him shelter when he was on the run and through Chittor went to Sindh where the Rajput princes gave him shelter and where Akbar was born at Umarkot (now in Pakistan) from where he escaped to Persia. When the Shah of Persia agreed to help him to win back the throne of Delhi one of the conditions was that he will propagate the Shia school of thought throughout Hindustan and Bairam Khan the Shia Persian was appointed the Guardian and Regent by Humayun when he died in Purana Qila at Delhi by

falling from the steps of the library there in 1556. Humayun had not been able to initiate his policy of befriending the Rajputs to the extent that he desired, because of his preoccupation with keeping his own Muslim Afghan, Persian and Turkish nobles under control who were warring among themselves on the Shia-Sunni question. But Akbar by subtle diplomacy did manage to marry the daughter of the nearest Rajput principality, Amber in 1562.

It is of note that he kept this inter-marriage and interaction policy confined to a tight circle of the throne. No interaction was allowed on a general basis. Akbar was sick of the bickering of his Muslim nobles and went for the recruiting of Hindu Rajasthani to counter their menace. The rapid rise to high rank of Rajput nobles with their Rajput followers should be clear enough proof of this divide and rule policy. Akbar was undoubtedly the most astute politician of all the Moghuls and an able administrator second only to the Afghan Sher Shah Suri, whose land reform system he copied and enlarged, through the genius of his finance minister Todar Mal. So the Rajputana princes have a great deal to be thankful to their arid and inhospitable country which gave them their character of kings in their own tight circle and surroundings. Nature gave them hard rock and not much else so they became carvers of rocks and builders of rock castles. This living gave them a fairy-tale attitude and some of them behaved like fairy-tale characters.

One such castle is the Fort at Jodhpur, 'the Eighth Wonder of the World,' as far as I am concerned, a view shared also by Mrs. Jacqualine Onassis Kennedy. I was going to write that but she stole my thunder — being a lady she wrote first. I had to cook up something quickly and wrote it.

Jodhpur is an old town in the desert of Marwar. One side is to the west of the Aravali Mountains and in the east a vast desert, the Thar, ridged with long low, isolated sand-hills. But in this arid plain I saw wheat, barley and millet crops growing in places where the overflow of the River Luni, which rises in the Ajmere lake, fertilizes the soil by overflowing its banks or where the wells, sunk in its bed, provided irrigation. I saw vegetables and crops of groundnuts thriving in saline water in farms between Jodhpur and Sardar Samand, where my friend Monarch H.H. Umaed Singh had a mini-palace built on the side of huge lake; flood water collected between the surrounding hills that can be seen in the distance. It is an enchanting place. I wrote the following in the Visitors
Book: They want me to write something in the Visitors Book. What do I write? At every corner I expect the 'Monarch', whom we all called His Highness, Umaed Singh, to appear and say "Hello Mickey." This is what he usually called me.

"In a place like this, with a past like it has, and the view that nature has blessed it with, one can only gaze in empty space — of the Past, of the Future — of Eternity."

But I must write something, he would have wanted me to "Koi Shaer Shar (couplets) likh do..." write some poetry, couplet of yours he would have said. I obey :

But souls that do not perish must meet.
I hope I come again — not to write, not to speak,
But just to be, where we had been before — to seek,
That End, that Joy, that Moment — to meet.

Recorded by the person whose portrait is in the drawing room, in the old full-dress, of his old Regiment, signed — Sher — to his friend — with Respects — in 1940.

SARDAR SAMAND, JODHPUR.
January 19, 1984.

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad was by far the largest and the most important Native State in India. It was bounded on the north-east by the Central Provinces, on the west by the Bombay Presidency, and on the south-west by the Madras Presidency. Including Berar, the area was about 98 thousand square miles. The Ruler, when I arrived in Bolarum in late 1935, was His Exalted Highness Mir Osman Ali Khan. The history of the state in brief is that the dynasty of the Nizam was founded by Asaf Jah, a general of Torkoman descent in the service of the Emperor Aurangzeb. In 1713, he was appointed Subedar of the Deccan, with the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk (Regulator of the State), which became hereditary in the family. The Emperor had died in 1707 and the Moghul Empire was at this stage torn by internal dissensions, and threatened by the rising power of the Marhattas. Asaf Jah was able, with little difficulty, to assert his independence, though he was less successful in repulsing the

inroads of the Marhatta cavalry. At his death in 1748, he was firmly established as an independent sovereign, with Hyderabad as his capital.

Nearly a century later in 1911, at the demise of Nizam Mehboob Ali Khan the father of Osman Ali Khan, the right of succession was fiercely contested among his brothers. Mir Osman Ali Khan had two younger brothers Salabat Jah and Basalat Jah. The late Nizam (Mehboob Ali Khan) was in favour of his second son Salabat. The eldest (Osman Ali Khan) he considered too shy, eccentric and too reserved. But the loyal nobles like Maharaja Sir Kishan Parshad managed to put the eldest, Osman Ali Khan, on the throne and thus maintained the old traditions and stopped further intrigue. People who did not know him called him a miser and some even called him mean. When he sent a dish from his royal dusterkhan (dining table) to his nobles, they had to pay in gold mohars for it! And yet no less than 5 thousand mouths were fed, twice a day, from his public kitchens. He established the Osmania University and gave scholarships for studies abroad. He selected the best people from anywhere he could, experts in their subjects and professions, for efficient administration of his kingdom. He was a first class administrator, a very hard working man, and a hard taskmaster.

But I must admit that it was difficult to fathom why he was so out of step with the times when he knew that the British were going, or did he think they would never go? Lord Mountbatten was sent for the operation in which it was proved by events that he was bending backwards to please the Congress. Why was Patel made the head of the Ministry of States three months before the transfer of power? To pressurise and bully the Princes to make up their minds!

H.H. Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, was the only one who had no illusions about his friend Dickie Mountbatten only after a couple of meetings with him! Mountbatten brought forward the date of independence from June 48 to August 47 against the advice of his senior advisors including the C-in-C the Auk. Not knowing the Indian soldiers, he had panicked when the Naval ratings of the Indian Navy mutinied in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. He should have assured the Indian Armed Froces that independence would come on the promised date but the two dominions may come into being even earlier and that the gap in the period, August 47 to June 48 was needed to establish the two governments so that a vacuum in administration and control did not take place. The Indian army would have understood the danger of chaos if the process was hurried. The behaviour of the Punjab Boundary Force under General Reese did demonstrate that communal feelings in the army could be kept under control if the troops knew what was happening and were led well. But Mountbatten was in a hurry to finish the job. He even altered the Radcliffe Boundary Award, giving Gurdaspur to India — to give a land link with Jammu and Kashmir. He made alterations at the canal head works at Ferozepur to ensure undisturbed flow of water to Bikaner through Ganga Canal after receiving a letter from His Highness Bikaner threatening to join Pakistan.

The only ones in a position to bargain with Patel were those who had contiguity with Pakistan: like Jaisalmer in Rajputana or Bikaner. The brave young Maharaja of Jodhpur, my friend's son Hanwat Singh, had made it clear that if he was pressurised he and Jaisalmer, his mother's state, could join Pakistan. That threat did not materialise because the young Maharaja soon died in an air crash with his second wife. The Ministry of States in New Dehil under Patel and Menon heaved a sigh of relief.

I had arrived in Bolarum in late October of 1935. Bolarum was part of that area which had been leased from the Nizam. Secundarabad, and Trimulgarry were all part of that area. Two Indian Regiments of cavalry were stationed in Bolarum and the British cavalry regiment with a detachment of Royal Horse Artillery was in

Trimulgarry and Secundarabad area. An Infantry Brigade was in Begumpet area. The affairs of this area came under the supervision of the British Resident at the Court of the Nizam in Hyderabad.

He resided in the British Residencey. When I arrived the subject of coversation with every one was the 'Berar Question'. To understand the relationship between the British and Nizam one has to delve into this question. One has to go back to 1766, when a treaty of 'perpetual honour, favour, alliance and attachment' was concluded between the 'Great Nawab' and 'the East India Company'.

In 1790, a new treaty was concluded to avert the impending attack of Tippu Sultan; further treaties of alliance were entered into in 1799 and 1800 in 'face of the challenge of the Marhattas'. A body of the troops known as the 'Subsidiary Force' came into existence under the provisions of the Treaty of 1766. On the one side, the Nizam had to cooperate in the wars which marked 'the gradual consolidation of the Company's possessions'; on the other, 'the dual purpose of maintaining the Nizam's authority within the confines of his own dominion and of further assisting the Company' in its wars.

During the opening years of the nineteenth century, a further force was added, known as the Nizam's Contingent. Advances had to be made from the British Treaty for the payment of this contingent force; in 1843 the Nizam was distinctly informed that in the event of application for further advance, a territorial security, for the payment of the debt would be demanded.

Letter from Dalhousie to General Fraser, dated 20 November 1849 :

> "The Nizam will force me (he continued) in such a case to take possession of territory at once, whereby the means of paying the contingent with certainty and regularity will be placed in the hands of this Government, virtually pledged to ensure such payment."

In a letter dated 19 December 1849, General Fraser answered Lord Dalhousie's enquiry as to the best districts to be appropriated as security for payment of the debt.

> "Berar Payen Ghat is the richest and most profitable portion of the Nizam's Dominions both in an agricultural and commercial point of view and I have never heard of any particular difficulty existing with regard to the collection of its revenues. I believe there is no part of India superior to it for the production of cotton; and the culture and exportation of this article might, under our management, be extended to a much greater degree than has ever been the case."

A close study of the letters of Colonel Law, the Resident who had succeeded General Fraser, impresses that the treaty was founded on intimidation and compulsion. In the Minutes of the conversation with the Nizam made on 12 March 1853, the Nizam's protesting against the costliness and need of the contingent read thus :

> "In the time of my father (said His Highness) the Peshwa of Poona became hostile both to the Company's Government and to this Government and Sahib Jung (meaning Sir Henry Russell) organised this contingent and sent it in different directions, alongwith the Company's troops, to fight the Marhatta people; and this was all very proper, and according to the Treaty, for those Marhattas were enemies of both states; and Company's army and my father's army conquered the ruler of Poona and you sent him off as prisoner to Hindoostan, and took the Country of Poona. After that there was no longer any war : so why was the contingent kept up longer than the war?"

The argument that the financial liability to maintain the contingent arose since the clause in the Treaty of 1800 'to demand any moment 15000 troops' from the Nizam had been broken in former times was suggested in reply by Col. Law, the Resident. But the Nizam's denouncing his responsibility since Raja Chandoo Lall alone consented to the contingent is untenable in law as well as in political theory.

Another line of argument by the Nizam is clear from the Minutes of Col. Law dated 4 May 1853. Asks the Nizam :

> "Did I ever made war against the English Government, or intrigue against it? Or do anything but co-operate with it and be obedient to its wishes, that I should be so disgraced?' Continued the Nizam powerlessly: Two acts on the part of Sovereign Prince are always reckoned disgraceful : One is to give away unnecessarily any portion of his hereditary territories, and the other is to disband troops who have been brave and faithful in his service."

Where there was some hesitation thus on the Nizam's part to execute the Treaty assigning the revenues of certain districts for the liquidation of his debt, writes Mr. Briggs :

> "An English Officer was seen, for days together moving about the outworks of the city with telescope in hand, as if ascertaining the defence to some dangerous intent."

Colonel Davidson, Resident at Hyderabad, wrote in a letter to the Foreign Secretary dated Hyderabad, 12 October 1860 :

> "I was present during the negotiations that took place in 1853... I witnessed the objugations and threats then used in order to induce the late Nizam to acquiesce in the Government's proposal."

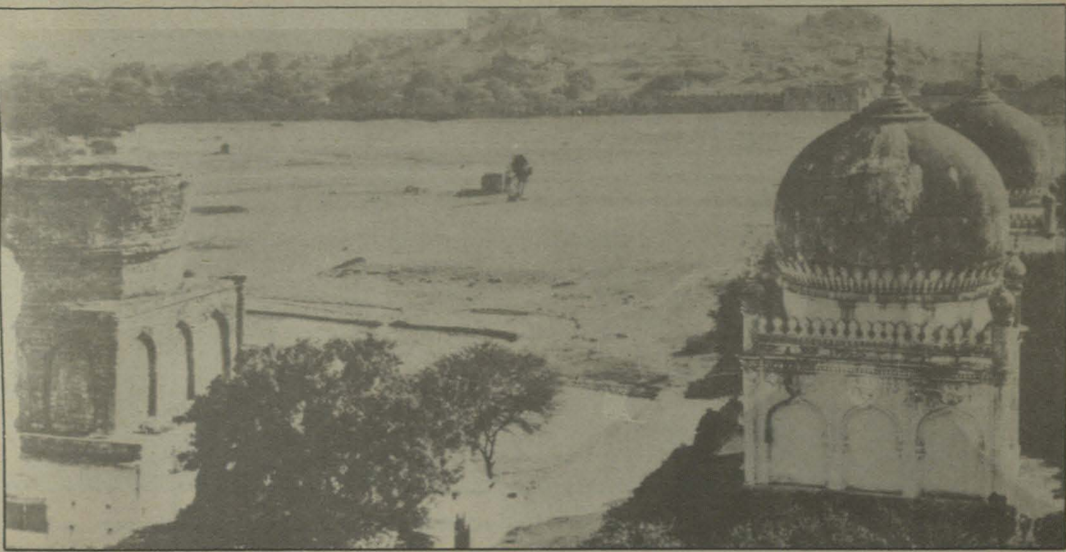
The Treaty of 1853 was concluded under such pressure administered to a friend and ally. By it, the British Government agreed to maintain in addition to the subsidiary force, an auxiliary force, called the 'Hyderabad Contingent' of not less than 5000 infantry, 200 cavalry and four field batteries of artillery. In order to provide for the payment of this force and for certain pensions and the interest on the debt, the Nizam assigned the districts in Berar, Dharsco, and Raichur Doab, which were estimated to yield a gross revenue of fifty lakhs of rupees. It was also agreed that the Resident at the Court of Hyderabad :

> "Shall always render true and faithful accounts every year to the Nizam of the receipts and disbursements connected with the said districts, and make over any surplus revenue that may exist, to His Highness, after the payment of the contingent and the other items...."

The official argument that the responsibility for financing the contingent lay on the Nizam under the Treaty of 1800 has now to be given up. Lord Dalhousie himself, though he was pressing that line of argument in his Khureeta to the Nizam is found giving it up in his Minute of 30 March 1853. The Governor General says:

> "I for my part, can never consent, as an honest man, to instruct the Resident to reply that the Contingent has been maintained by the Nizam from the end of the war in 1817 until now, because the 12th article of the Treaty of 1800 obliges His Highness to maintain it.
>
> "The Nizam's invaluable services to the British Government during the Mutiny of 1857 were also borne in mind prior to the Treaty of 1860. The lands assigned by Hyderabad yield much more than was needed for the upkeep of the Contingent. The surplus districts of Daraseo and the Raichur Doab were handed back under the Treaty. The remaining assigned districts in Berar were to be 'held by the British Government in trust' for the purposes specified in the Treaty in 1853."

The Picture of the old Fortress-City of Golconda



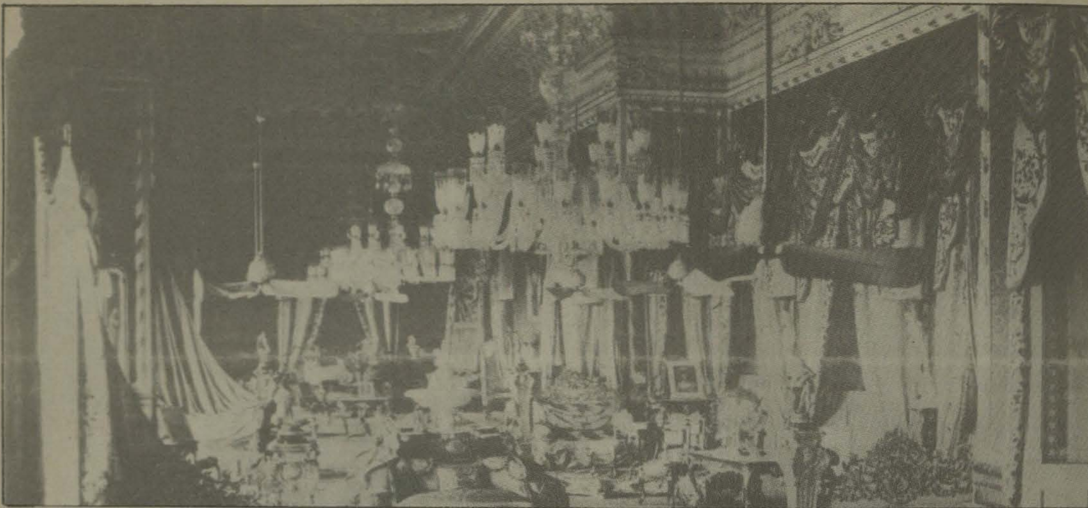
The Old Capital of the Country known as Hyderabad State - Golconda. This territory had lain in muslim hands practicaly without interruption, since the end of 13th century A.D. The capital of the 3rd Muslim dynasty was Golconda. The capital moved to Hyderabad - 5 miles away - later The old Tombs of Golconda Kings can be seen in the fore - ground

The residency of Hyderabad



The relations of the British Crown were maintained through Political officers. In the largest States the officer was known as the Resident and his official residence as the Residency. This Residency above was built in 1803 on a grand style - Cost being borne by the Nizam!

The Falaknuma Palace of Hyderabad



The State Drawing Room. In the State bed Chambers reserved for guests of highest rank, all the furniture and fittings were of solid Silver and Crystal Glass



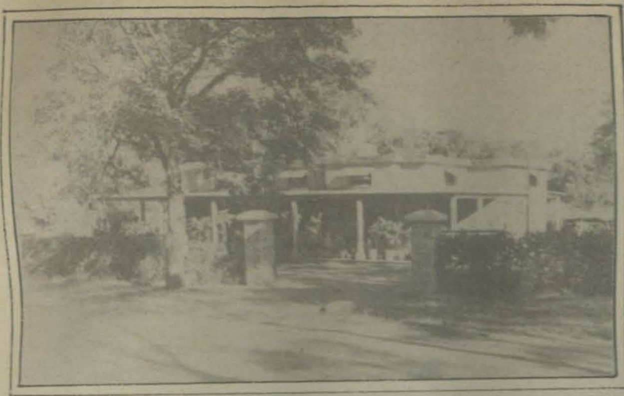
His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan in his youth



At the Princes conference in New Delhi with President of India - Rajindar Parshad - on his right, supported by the Prime Minister Pundit Nehru



Farewell Party for 17th/21st Lancers given by the Hyderabad Lancers (1935) Captain Richard Hull (now Field Marshal Sir Richard Hull K.G. etc) can be seen in the picture



My house in 1940. M-48 at Bolaram (the cavalary contonment in Hyderabad State in contonment area-British territory).



The drawing room and polo trophies at Bolaram



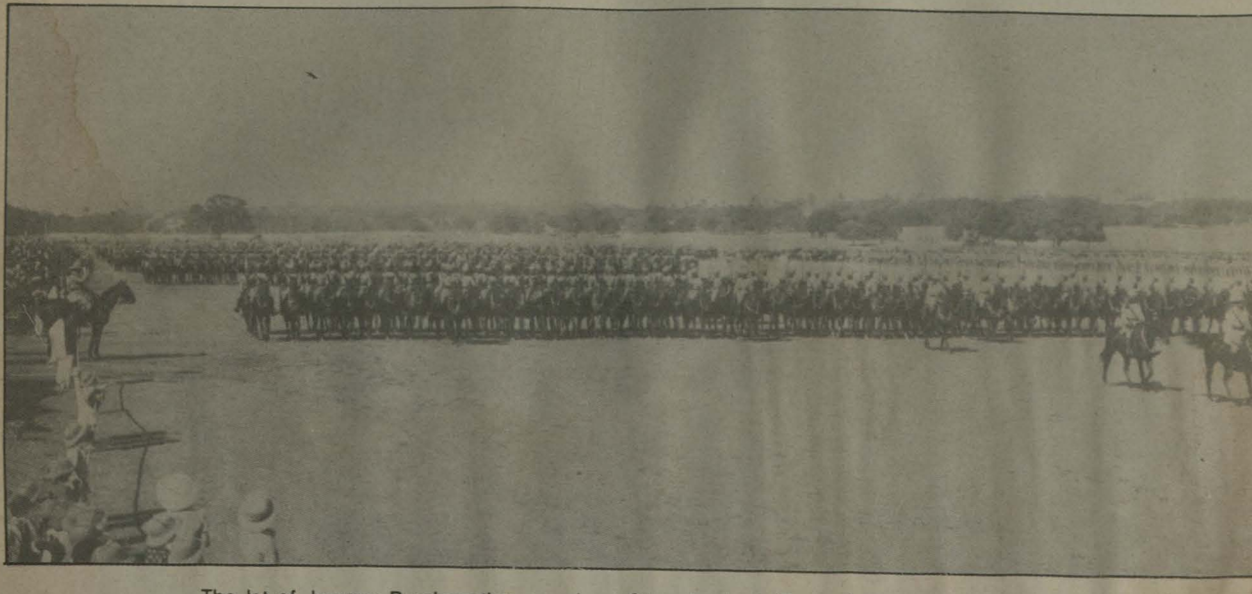
Self Receiving Prize at Sikandarabad polo ground.



Polo at Sikandarabad-self scoring goal



7th Light Cavalry P.M.Squardron Bolaram (Deccan) 1940



The Ist of January Proclamation parade at Sikandarabad (Deccan) 7th Light Cavalry leading the March past - 1939



Farewell Polo mach between 7th Light Cavalry and Hyderabad State Polo Team at Fetah Medan 1940

The Princess Durru Shehvar Princess of Berar is presenting a Souvenir to Nawab Khusrojang (Minister for Defence Hyderabad) who umpired the game. My mare Niloufar - in Programme shown as 'Nilvalue'! - won the prize for the best polo pony. The three ladies in the picture are Her Highness Cooch Behar (Ma), Princess Niloufar wife of Prince Muazzam Jah the son of Nizam of Hyderabad and Princess Nafeesah. The resident is on their left and the Prince of Berar on his left.



The Nizam receiving the President of India Rajindar Parshad at King Kothi-Hyderabad



Her Royal H. the Princess Durru Shehvar daughter of the Sultan of Turkey - the Princess of Berar standing infront of the painting done by her father His Majesty the Sultan of Turkey.



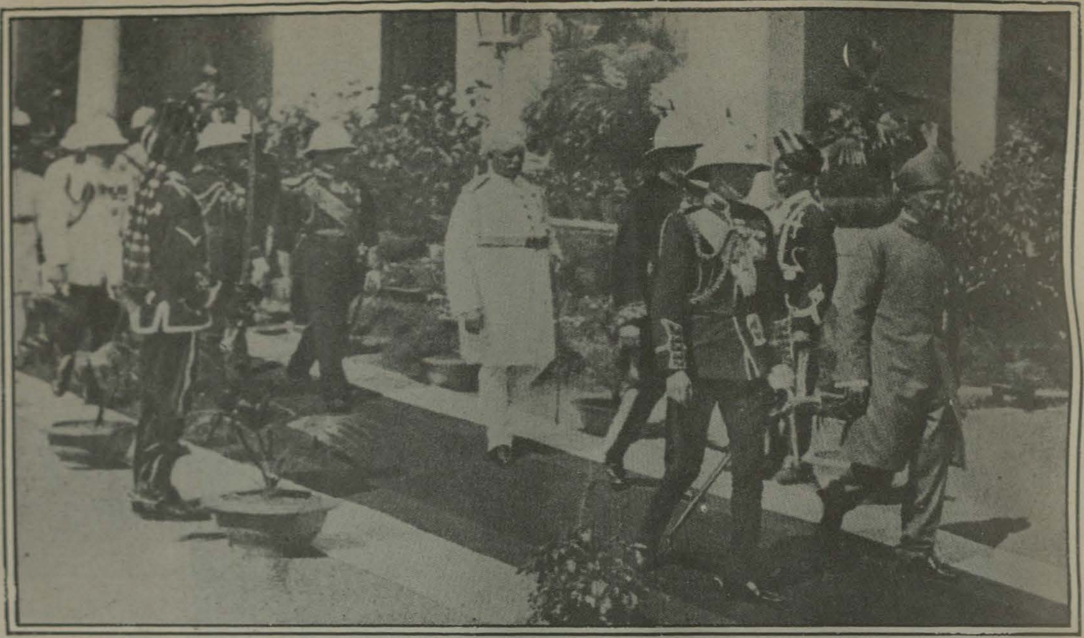
My friend Nawab Yousaf Ali Khan Bahadar of Hyderabad - Salar Jang - II



Princess Durru Shehvar children's hospital



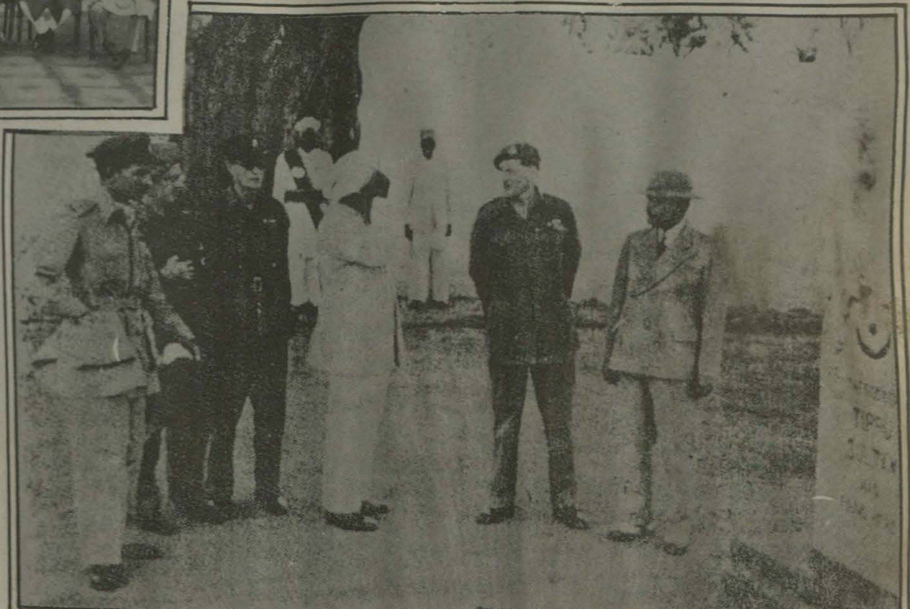
A view of the Hospital.



His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad Mir Osman Ali Khan Asif Jah the VII th, conducting the Prince to the Durbar Hall.



The Hyderabad cabinat with Maharaja Sir Krishan Parshad the Prime Minister in the centre.



Field Marshal Auchinleck standing near the Marble Tablet where Sultan Tipu's body was recovered from the heaps of dead and wounded on the 4th of May 1799 at Sringapatam-when Hyderabad had sided with the British.

During the Nizam's minority, Sir Salar Jung, the famous minister, had made more than one attempt to obtain the restoration of Berar by payment of a capital sum. Lord Salisbury refused in 1878 a request for its restoration and supported the Government of India.

The retention of Berar continued as an irritant in the British Government's relations with the Nizam as the brilliant biographer of Lord Curzon has put it :

> "Lord Curzon's view was that though words in the Treaties could be quoted which would fairly cover everything that had been done, yet there were passages in the history of the relations between the Company and the Nizam which were not in strict accordance with the most scrupulous standards of British honour."

On 5 November 1902, an agreement was signed between the Nizam and the British Government which was confirmed by the Government of India on the 16 December 1902.

(i) His Highness the Nizam whose sovereignty over the Assigned Districts is reaffirmed, leases them to the British Government in perpetuity in consideration of the Government to him by the British Government of a fixed rent of 25 lakhs of rupees per annum :

(ii) The British Government while retaining the full and exclusive jurisdiction and authority in the Assigned Districts which they enjoy under the Treaties of 1853 and 1860, shall be at liberty, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in those treaties to administer the Assigned Districts in such manner as they may deem disirable and also to redistribute, reduce, reorganise and control the forces now composing the Hyderabad Contingent as they may think fit, due provision being made as stipulated by Art. 3 of the Treaty of 1853 for the protection of His Highness.

The administration of Berar was entrusted to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces and the Hyderabad Contingent has ceased to exist, the artillery having been disbanded and the cavalry and infantry absorbed in the regular army. The Governor General in Council was legislating for this area under Order-in-Council under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.

Under the Government of India Act 1919, Berar was administered with, but not as part of the Central Provinces. The inhabitants elected a certain number of representatives who were then formally nominated as members of the Central Provinces Legislature; has been applied to Berar through the machinery of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act. Berar being Hyderabad territory, the inhabitants of Berar were not British subjects but were subjects of the Nizam. The Nizam had the satisfaction under Curzon's treaty, of his birthday being celebrated in Amraoti, the capital of Berar, by firing a Salute, to visualize a sign of his sovereignty.

But the matter did not end with the gun salute. The Nizam questioned the validity of pledging posterity, and asked for a commission to inquire into the whole case and for an account to be rendered of the pecuniary dealings between the two Governments. Lord Reading took occasion to develop, in his reply letter dated 27 March 1926, an extension of paramountcy as 'based not only upon treaties and engagements' but existing 'independently of them and quite apart from its prerogative in matters relating to foreign powers and policies'. He stressed the hard fact that no one has been allowed to entertain the idea of equality. But His Majesty was now pleased to command that the Heir Apparent of the Nizam shall be called 'His Highness the Prince of Berar'. I was invited to dinner at Belavista when Prince Azamjah became His Highness the Prince of Berar.

I had been in Bolarum a couple of months when one Friday my great maternal Aunt had invited me to her Habshiguda country residence to be presented to His Exalted Highness Nawab Mir Osman Ali Khan — the Nizam of Hyderabad. This was my first meeting with this extraordinary Prince, the richest man in the world looking the poorest, dressed so simply and humbly. He was paying a visit to Nawab Manzur Jang's House who was one of his close courtiers related to Maharaja Sir Kishan Prashad through marriage — his son married to one of the Maharaja's daughters. I went a number of times to the Maharaja's palace in Bolarum where he resided sometimes. Sir Kishan Prashad was a fine poet both in Urdu and Persain. And I learnt a lot in those visits. He was a kind man. And a noble one to show such consideration and respect to a young Captain of the Indian Army. I had recited a composition of my poetry to him on one or two occasions, and he was genuinely overjoyed and appreciated it. He was at their lunch too. His Exalted Highness appreciated the cooking of my great Aunt. When I arrived she was busy with her cooking at her 'ungeethi (a movable open light stove burning charcoal fire). This lady was the younger sister of my maternal grand-father — a most charming old lady — a Queen.

His Exalted Highness arrived in an old Chevrolet of pre-dated model, dressed in his usual kurta pajama and an ordinary achkan of light wool with a button or two missing. His head was covered by an old red fez cap, with the tassel missing. He bounced out of the car, looked around with his golden thin rimmed glasses on his nose, surveying right and left, then climbed the three steps into the verandah leading into the main room, a long rectangular room with arrangements for sitting on the floor; he obviously had been there before, he knew his bearings. The assemblance in the room was sitting in double rows wearing their 'Dastars' all belted at the waists with 'Buqloos'.

My uncle Manzur Jang had sent his son Baber Mirza to fetch me. I was wearing my blue blazer with regimental buttons and a light grey trouser and my regimental tie. Although looking very Sahibish in that company, I knew what to do being a member of this vast elite community. I went forward, having taken off my shoes before I stepped onto the carpets and performed my salaams doubled up at the waist. I had no headdress or buqloos. He looked me up and down. Not a word had been spoken yet.

My uncle then started reciting my bio-data. His Exalted Highness was watching me and not so much listening to what was being said. 'When did you come?' he interrupted. He spoke in Urdu, the voice was sharp to the point of being shrill. 'Couple of months back, Sir'. 'From where?' was the next quick question. 'Sir my regiment's last station was Loralai in Baluchistan.' 'That is a long way off'. He knew his geography I thought to myself. I was well aware that I was talking to the Number 1 ruling prince of India, ruler of a dominion larger than France and reputedly the richest man in the world. That I well imagined could be true after seeing the simplicity and the frugality of his dress, saving on two buttons missing on his long coat, his achkan. I had yet to learn many more things about him, he was a complex person and a very accomplished one.

In the meantime, Naniamma, my grand-mother arrived. They all rose for her including the Nizam. She went forward to him and did her Salaam, with perfect dignity and poise, dressed in all white with her white hair covered by a Duppatta. 'amma kaisi hain?' (Mother how are you?) The Exalted Highness addressed her. 'Sarkar, Khuda ka shukar hay zinda hun aur aap ko doain dayte hun', (My Lord, by the grace of God, I am alive and pray for you). He sat down and she took her seat near me. Addressing me she said, 'Mian, (an affectionate manner of addressing a

youngster) dekha tum nay hamaray badshah ko', (Mian now you have seen our king). This needed no reply except a kind of nod with a blush of acceptance one.

Time was precious. His Exalted Highness did not believe in wasting time either. Not only did he go through the state papers regularly every day, but he was also an accomplished Urdu poet. And poets are inclined to use their time composing and recomposing their poetry. So they have no time to waste in scintillating conversation, which also discharges the batteries for writing and composing. Later I found that those who had come in the entourage were also shairs (poets).

Food was served, people came and spread the dustarkhawan (tablecloth) and then arrived the huge trays with various dishes with sliver dome-like covers (surposh) to keep the food warm and also to keep the evil hungry eyes away; an old superstition, quite understandable, where food for the poor was scarce. But I noticed that the food for His Exalted Highness had come in a separate large silver tray with dishes covered with a golden cloth. This I presumed were the items cooked by Naniamma, I was right. He was served by her. He took a little from all the dishes and then ordered that they sould be served to others as well. So I was able to taste the special food which was very good.

When the food was finished and the dustarkhawan was folded and taken away and hands washed in silver basins (chilamchees), pans were served. Pan is a concoction eaten after food, a betal leaf which is covered with lime and katha (bark of a special tree which is prepared specially for this purpose and has digestive qualities to which lime is added for cleansing of the teeth and gums). This is eaten or rather chewed, in order to create saliva for digestive purposes and to clean the mouth. That is why betal nut itself is cut into small piece and put inside and then the leaf is rolled-up and held together by a clove. Unfortunately, it is habit forming. People in places like Bhopal just can't do without it. I know people who when awake have to be chewing the whole time and the only time they don't is either when they are eating or sleeping. Some even add other items like cocaine in it to give them more kick out of it but that of course is harmful.

In the south of India where the betal leaf grows in abundance and the betal creeper they chew the whole time results in cancer of the mouth. Pan and attar (perfume) were two items presented on formal visits to guests. I remember so well as a small boy the first time I saw Sir Malcolm Hailey (the Governor of Punjab) when he first time called on my mother in Pataudi. Lord Hailey as he later became, was an Indian Civil Servant — and knew how to compete with each item. When the attar came in a golden salver he produced his white handkerchief and my mother put some perfume on it. It came out of a golden holder — like an inkpot, with a golden match type of thing in it which was dipped and then the perfume put on the hand or on the cloth. This perfume I remember was an only affair which usually Indian attars are, because I noticed it left a mark on this handkerchief. Later I was to find out that such marks were not easy to remove.

The main cause of cancer of the mouth in the south of India is the Pan because strong lime kept in the mouth for hours tends to produce irritation and soreness inside the cheeks. The men suffer with cancer of the throat. The reason is not Pan, but hot warm food. Why not women? Because the men are served first and by the time the turn of the women comes the food is cold. An old Hindu custom — men first, women afterwards — particularly among the poor.

His Exalted Highness was given a special Pan which put him in a more relaxed mood. Having heard so much about him and found him dressed the way he was, so kind and humble in bearing, the courtiers surrounding him doubled up before him always speaking with both their hands folded in reverence. This hand-folding tradition is a very practical one and a very old one — one cannot use a weapon in

that position. I think the tradition in Islam in the ritual of prayers of raising hands upto the ears and then folding them in front has the same origin, ensuring that there were no hidden weapons under the arms. These are old environmental traditions, varying in styles from country to country, but the spirit behind them is the same.

I watched every movemet of His Exalted Highness and noted it. He was short and a lightly built person — very light. He had thin hands and fingers on which were silver rings with Feroza (turquoise) in them.

Feroza (turquoise) is worn a lot by Shia Muslims, who believe in Hazrat Ali — the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) the first Amir (the fountain head of the line being the Prophet). The Nizam's dynasty belonged to Sunni Hanafi school of thinking, but His Exalted Highness Osman Ali Khan was supposed to have Shia leanings. Some of the top nobles of Hyderabad were Shias. Before Aurangzeb conquered this area the kingdoms of Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar were Shias and that is what the fight was about. I think if that had not been then we may never have heard of Shivaji and the Marhattas. It should be remembered, that Shivaji, the Marhatta Hindu hero took service with the rulers of Bijapur and rose in rank from there. While Muslims were fighting Muslims the Hindu Marhattas were getting stronger. There is so much to learn from history. But does one?

In the year that I had been in Bolarum I had become very friendly with Salarjang (Yousaf Ali Khan) the progeny of the famous Sir Salar Jang I of 1857 mutiny days. He was a Shia and it was the 10th of Moharram, the martyrs day — when the Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w.s.) grandson, Hazrat Imam Hussan, was massacred at Karbala in Iraq. A great day of mourning for the Shias who by demonstrating, on this day of mourning their sorrow and grief have kept this cohesive factor alive in their ranks.

My friend had invited me to watch the Muharram procession to his Imambarah from his city Palace (Haveli). I arrived early. Then came the Commissioner of Police and others, Chote Sahib, the No. 2 son of His Exalted Highness — Prince Muazzam Jah, was the last to arrive.

I got to know both brothers well. But the Prince of Berar much more, because he was fond of Polo and even played now and again. He was an Honorary Officer in my Regiment 7th Light Cavalry. Our Mess in Bolarum was the Hyderabad Contingent Mess, with a huge ball room next to the Lounge and dining room.

I met the younger Prince. The elder one was not coming. These Princes were married to Turkish Princesses — the Prince of Berar was married to Princess Durrushahwar, the daughter of the last Sultan of Turkey and the younger Prince was married to the Princess Nilofer, the niece of the Sultan.

By the time all this happened one heard shrill sounds of the whistle and sirens announcing the arrival of His Exalted Highness. I rushed and took my position in the window with my camera. His Exalted Highness was in his usual dress marching ahead of a group who looked like courtiers and plain clothes security people. I took some pictures. It was a solemn affair a sort of slow march with music of mourning. It was a hot day. I came back to the hall of the palace which was cool. The fountain in the centre was giving out a cool spray, near the famous statue — a woman in a veil in Italian marble a master-piece depicting in marble a beautiful face with a lovely figure, under the veil. It is the show piece of the Salarjang Museum of today in Hyderabad but I am afraid it is badly lit.

As I came in, Salarjang asked me if I had managed to get a picture. This was heard by the Commissioner of Police who after a while strolled upto me and politely said 'Nawabzada Sahib taking of pictures of His Exalted Highness is not

allowed'. I did not say anything. Salarjang came to my rescue. 'Why not, His Exalted Highness is in a public place anyone can take a picture,' came the reply. 'No Sir, if someone does we confiscate the camera'. 'What utter rubbish', came the remark from the younger Prince. 'Sir these are not my orders but of Alla Hazrat': "Well they are wrong, how can you stop people from taking pictures when he is in a public place" said the Prince.

As it was becoming an acrimonious affair I opened my camera, took the roll out and gave it to the Commissioner. When he wanted to have the camera, I refused. 'No Sir you are not going to have my camera; the rule is against taking pictures. I have given you the film, without the film the camera cannot take the picture and I have no other film and what more if I had not been outside my territory and had taken pictures and you had asked me I would have not given you the film either'.

The Commissioner was a nice man. He knew who I was and was apologetic about the matter. "You should get the picture developed and send it to the Nawabzada", said the younger Prince "and say I said so". As far as I was concerned the matter was dead. Another lesson was learnt. I kept my camera and I never got the prints; such were the ways of the state. I am sure that His Exalted Highness had never given the orders that had been attributed to him. He was a kind man and a very human one, as will be demonstrated by the incident which follows. This was all part of the security red tape, which I understood well. Sometimes very necessary.

The Jubilee celebrations were held in the winter of 1936 — His Exalted Highness had ascended the throne before King George the Fifth's Dehli Darbar in 1911.

My father-in-law Sir Abdul Samad Khan with other friends of His Exalted Highness, like Dr. Zia-ud-Din, Vice Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, and Maulana Shaukat Ali, elder brother of late Maulana Mohammad Ali of Khilafat fame, had been invited to attend the celebrations.

There was a big reception in the Public Gardens (Bagh-e-Aam) to which I had also been invited. I soon noticed that I was the only one in European clothes. Others were all in their Achkans with Dastars (special headdress of Hyderabad nobility). I saw the Senior Prince, Azam Jah, now the Prince of Berar, coming towards me. He acknowledged my Salaam with a smile and said, 'Nawab you will be thrown out by the old man for being improperly dressed'. They were all wearing their yellow Dastar with the gold turra in it — only the immediate royal family could wear this. I was in my three piece grey suit with my Regimental tie and nothing on the head. I took it as a joke. Soon whistles were heard and the Alla Hazrat arrived. He was in his usual white Kurta Pajama and the same old Achkan and the same old red fez cap with the tassel missing. The Princesses and Princes did their Kornish-Bow and salaams (courtesies). He just nodded and smiled and sat down on the central yellow sofa. He asked the Princesses to sit near him. He then looked around, right and left. I was quite concerned, because one never knew about the moods of these chaps — the rulers — and he was the biggest of them all — a king.

By this time his gaze had gone around the arena and his head now turned towards us. I got a bit anxious, Maulana kept saying "Young man your time has come to be thrown out". Maulana was a tall-man — a 7 footer, a giant. "Maulana he is looking at you and not at me". "That is what you think". Sir Samad spoke, 'don't worry nothing will happen'. I was watching His Exalted Highness like a hawk but with my head bowed.

It was now noticed that he was summoning a Chobdar, a tall man in gold and yellow long coat who was sent to fetch someone. Nearby he found the person, the Military Secretary, Nawab Hamid Yar Jang (the eldest son of late Sir Afsar-ul-Mulk

and elder brother of uncle Khusrojang). Hamid Yar Jang arrived doubled up and bent low to receive His Exalted Highness's commands. After a few seconds he looked up towards our sofa and at me. Maulana spoke, 'Get ready my boy'. I put up a nervous smile. Hamid Sahib made his way towards us, and approached the sofa from behind. His Exalted Highness was watching all this and so was everyone else. For me it was a moment of suspense. He came behind me, put his hand on my left shoulder, and said, 'Nawab, His Exalted Highness would like you to join him in thanksgiving prayers in the small Bagh-e-Aam mosque tomorrow at 0900 hours'. That was the most pleasant shock I could have received. I got up, faced His Exalted Highness, who was looking at me and did my salaams with a deep bow. He smiled and waved at me. I salaamed again and sat down. My father-in-law patted me on my back and said 'Well done, that is the way to do it'. Maulana came out with, 'You are a very lucky man Sher Sahib'.

Soon tea was served and the usual chatter and clatter started and it became the usual reception, but with restraint and dignity. God had certainly been kind to me: The King of Hyderabad, known as an eccentric and with a mood that no one could predict, had invited a young Captain, to say prayers with him.

After tea and the departure of His Exalted Highness both the Princes strolled over to me asking, 'What was the Royal command?'

'I am to say my prayers with him in the small mosque in this garden tomorrow morning. My friend Salarjang also came over and asked about the command. I told him, and said 'I have a problem now I haven't got a winter Achkan or a cap'. 'Don't worry, I have plenty of these things. Come back with me and I will fit you'. 'Thank you Sir' I had said, and went back to his palace with him.

At Salarjang's Haveli, he took me into his dressing room and ordered his man incharge of wardrobe to show the Achkans. The man, with the bow opened some almirahs (hanging cupboard) along the wall, where a hundred or more achkans were hanging to select from. I picked a very nice one of Kashmir wool, that fitted me well. Then a cap for the head was selected, the Kurta and Pajama and even socks and black pumps. So I was set for tomorrow, insha-Allah (God willing). I spent the night there and the next morning at the appointed time Nawab Salarjang's Rolls — Bentley took me to the small mosque in Bagh-e-Aam. Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Ziauddin, Sir Abdul Samad, Nawab Zainyarjang and two or three others were already there. I took my seat near Sir Samad and Maulana. They could not have been more than a dozen people in the mosque. Soon whistles could be heard. The Khateeb (Preacher) got up, 'Gentlemen Alla Hazrat is due anytime now. No one is to rise or salaam when he enters in the mosque.' That was easy enough I said to myself. 'If you have to rub your eyes please rub both with both hands'. Odd, I said to myself again. 'Please avoid a sneeze or a yawn if you can'. Yawn was easy to suppress but a sneeze was not so easy, so one can only pray that it will not decide to come. 'And finally gentlemen the collar of the achkan should be done up. I made a move to close my collar, it was too tight. In my enthusiasm I had completely forgotten to try the collar. Hell, I said to myself which was heard. Sir Samad, 'What is wrong?' My collar was too tight I forgot to check — 'keep your head down he may not notice it'. So I sat with my head down when His Exalted Highness arrived. No one stood up. There was an atmosphere of complete silence for a moment. He came and sat with our group. He was not more that a couple of feet from us. He was facing the garden when we had our backs to it. He spoke to Sir Samad and looked towards me 'Why has he got his head down like that'. Sir Samad replied, 'Sarkar his achkan collar is too tight and the Khateeb had said that collars must be done up'. His Exalted Highness roared with laughter, 'don't bother what the Khateeb said, it is all right'. He had a shrill type of a laugh. I was so close

to him that I could not avoid examining him in detail when he was not looking at me. First, cap, it was the same one. The achkan was made of heavier woollen material No. 3 buttom from the top was missing. And right at the bottom of the right fall of the achkan was a small grease mark. I was engrossed in this study when the Khateeb called us to prayer. We all got up and followed His Exalted Highness to the centre of the mosque. I took my place behind him in the second row. There were about 20 people in all — 10 in each row.

The sermon from the pulpit was short and then we got up for prayers. As the Khateeb started his recitation I heard a sob. By the time the two Farz were over His Exalted Highnesss was sobbing profusely. When the prayer came to an end he got up in a hurry and half running went to the steps where he had taken off his slippers. The Prince of Berar ran after him to help him with his slippers — a custom, of respect, but was late. His Exalted Highness jumped into his 1928 model-Ford Maroon Colour, with a silver duster on the bonnet and was away. The poor Military Secretary was just able to get into his seat next to the chauffeur. It was a scene that is as fresh today as it was half a century ago, when it occurred. His Exalted Highness was sitting alone on the back seat. We were only able to come out of the mosque after the sound of the whistles had ceased and the Prince of Berar had departed. His Exalted Highness left the mosque for King Kothi, his residence.

I visited the same King Kothi in 1938 after nearly half a century. There was no guards or chobdars at the gates. The curtain I think was the same old one, light brown of quilt covered with dust but still hanging in front of the main gate. But the other gate near where His Exalted Highness now lies buried across the road was wide open. We were able to go in and turn the car. In the big portico a cow, red in colour, was resting in the centre of this portico and a couple of small goats were munching some greenery from the gound — by the side of the pillars. I tried to explain to my wife what protocol had to be gone through in the past to reach the portico, and a battalion of servants was usually seen moving, hustling, bustling, in the big courtyard in front of the Kothi palace.

I had gone there to put flowers on this king's simple grave where he is buried in the simple mosque that he built for himself, near a huge boulder of rock, that is so common in that part of the world. Near him is buried his youngest son — picture hangs from a nail showing His Exalted Highness standing, holding this boy in his arms. There are one or two other graves. But I did not ask too many questions. One of the attendants in the mosque pointed out a grave which was supposed to be of the child's mother.

The size, the simplicity, the austere atmosphere of this whole mosque set up suited his character perfectly. I was told that when the child died he buried him himself and pointed out where he was to be buried himself when he died.

The previous Nizams are buried in the royal graveyard near Chaumahla (four palace complex) palace, in the city where all the durbars were held. Their burial was done with the same customs and traditions as the Moghul Emperors. The dead body was never taken out of the doorway, but a breach was made in the side wall to enter into the royal graveyard. These, I suppose were security measures so that nobody would know when, 'the King was dead, long live the King'. The burial took place after the successor had been selected — at his command.

For a while I sat down in the car, reflecting, the glory that was Hyderabad. The past aura of majesty that struck one, as one entered the presence of this king — this humble, simply attired man the Alla Hazrat — the mighty lord.

The brief story that I have related is that of the ruler of the biggest and the most senior of the Princes, important enough to carry the title of 'Faithful Ally'. The

dynasty was founded by Asaf Jah a General of Turkoman descent in the service of Emperor Aurangzeb. In 1713 he was appointed Subedar (Governor of Province) of the Deccan, with the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk (Regulator of the State), so the 'Nizam' and 'Asif Jah' became hereditary titles of the rulers. The present Nizam was the seventh Asaf Jah.

The city of Hyderabad was founded in 1659 by Kutab Shah Muhammad Kuli who had moved his capital from Golconda, 7 miles away, because of its want of water. Hyderabad is on the Musi river and the city is about 1,700 ft. above sea level.

His Exalted Highness Mir Osman Ali Khan, the Nizam I saw, may have been eccentric or even neurotic, but he was a man of intelligence. His poetry alone is a proof of that. And his progressive attitude in the field of education has its monuments in the outcome of Osmania University. He was religious but tolerant and progressive. He selected an English Muslim scholar to translate the Qur'an for him. It may lack the beautiful commentaries and notes of the one completed by Abdullah Yousaf Ali, but it is a book with literal translation which makes it easy for an average person to learn and understand Arabic in its purest form.

Osman Ali Khan was a devout man. May be in his own way. But for anyone to be devout in his position, the absolute king, the absolute master of his kingdom and its subjects and yet to be devout was a saintly streak. He may have spent nothing on himself but he did feed over five thousand people every day, from his royal kitchens. He may have travelled in rickety old cars himself but his Prime Minister had a Rolls Royce and so had his two elder sons and a number of other great nobles.

A number of people laughed at him at his extreme eccentricities, but I admired him for that. To me he was a good man. But I must admit that I was surprised in 1947 when he was taken by surprise by the attitude of the British towards him. Surely a man of intelligence should have known that important changes were bound to come after the War. He should have known that it was in the Congress Party's manifesto that the princely states were to be eliminated. What had he done about that? He had some, apparently able, adivisers, like Nawab of Chattari, who was his Prime Minister at the later period of the War. Or was he too British to doubt their inability to do anything for the princes at the end of the War. Or did he think that the British would never go. Not after winning it. Perhaps his advisers were more courtiers than astute observers of events developing in the world around them.

Hyderabad had established its Legislative Council in 1893 but it was merely a collection of high executives, more of an advisory council than a legislative one. In 1921 a Jarida (proclamation) was issued ordering the complete separation of the judicial from the executive functions, and establishing a High Court of Judicature with an appellate jurisdiction. A Reform Committee was constituted in September, 1937. And a Government Order on Reform was released to the Press on 26 July 1939. But the constitutional position of the ruler had been left in its old autocratic character. The ruler according to the Order, was 'both supreme head of the state and an embodiment of the peoples sovereignty'.

Credit must go to people like Lord Irwin (later Viscount Halifax) for warning the princes, of more than five hundred protected states and Jagirs that existed. Most of them were medieval autocracies. Ultimately the Paramount Power was responsible for the well-being of all the subjects. As early as 1927 it had been suggested that all the states should be liquidated and the ruling families pensioned off. The more feasible was to incorporate the minor states — of the dependent class — into adjacent British provinces, for without this the minimum standard of civilised

administration in all the states, suggested as early as 1927 by Lord Irwin as Viceroy, could not be achieved.

The major states should have been turned into constitutional monarchies like England. The establishment of responsible government in such states — by stages, if necessary, was the only way, also, of 'restricting Paramountcy to its proper field of action'.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British had treaties with the Princes of 'submission of obedience, of protection or of subordinate cooperation'. The Paramountcy was only a part of the prerogative', urged Professor Holdsworth.

To understand the relationship between the Nizam and the British, one would have to read a few thick volumes but my point here is only to illustrate in a very brief manner the 'let down' of the Nizam by the British in 1947 — the end. And for this the study of the Berar Question, very briefly, should suffice.

When I arrived in Bolarum in 1935 the Government of India Act of 1935 had been enacted. Pakistan also functioned under this act till 1956 when the first Constitution was agreed upon and passed by the Constituent Assembly (to be abrogated by Ayub Khan in 1958). By this Act the anomalous position in the Berar case was removed, 'nothwitstanding the continuance of the Sovereignty of His Exalted Highness over Berar', shall be part of the Central Provnce (Section 47).

In an authoritative collateral letter to the Nizam by the Viceroy dated 26 October 1936, provision is made for the unfortunate contingency, he 'may exercise full and exclusive jurisdiction and authority' in Berar. The parts of the Agreement which would remain unaffected were the following:

(i) The recognition of the Sovereignty of His Exalted Highness the Nizam over Berar,
(ii) The payment of the sum of Rs.25,000,000 to the Nizam.
(iii) Any of the military guarantees which under existing treaties to the Nizam enjoys.
(iv) The consent of the Nizam would be necessary, if any arrangement for the administration of the Berar were made 'upon a basis essentially different from that which exists at the moment'.

The Berar Question serves as a single instance through its different phases of growth and development of the undefined paramountcy, defying juristic analysis.

To go through this exercise it was necessary to understand the relationship between the British and the Nizam — their Faithful Ally, and to appreciate fully how disgracefully they let him down in 1947. The Berar Question is a clear example of how vague and sometimes one-sided the Agreements were. The Nizam had requested the Viceroy for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the Berar Case.... In a reply, dated 27 March 1926 Lord Reading took occasion to stress the hard fact that 'no ruler of an Indian state can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing!' Professor Holdsworth in his argument further said, 'prerogative is not the source of paramountcy'. He then developed his theme that the growth of Paramountcy had added a new and a distinct prerogative to the Crown. 'This hydra-headed creature which was ever growing had to face juristic modifications.' The Government of India Act, 1935 redefined all this under Section 2.

There is no space here to go into legalities; books have been written on them. Lord Moncton, who was constitutional adviser to the Nizam has clearly explained the Hyderabad Case. In the end what mattered was Power. All these treaties etc. could only be guaranteed if the power was with the guaranteeing power. The British ceased to be that in 1947, even before the actual Partition. They were leaving because the War had taken a great toll at Home. A Labour Government was in

power and their priorities were at home first. Two new powers had emerged after the War, USA and USSR and they were demanding that India be given self-government at the earliest. They invited India to open embassies in their capitals. It was as a result of that offer that I was sent to Washington as India's first Service Attache in early 1946. Some might say that all this is crying ove spilled milk. Not at all. Not really. One is trying to find out why and how these princes, whom the British protected and nurtured and who sided with them and through their friendship helped the British to run the country with efficiency and grandeur for so long, were dropped like hot bricks in the end. This is all the more surprising as the British always proclaimed themselves as the standard bearers of morality. The princes learnt to believe in them and could not believe that they would be let down in such a callous manner. Some thought that after winning the War their protectors would never go.

Lord Mountbatten was selected for the job of cutting the sacred knot. Not so much because he was a cousin of the King (George VI) but because he was vain and ambitious enough to ride rough-shod over anything for the glory of doing something that perhaps others were not prepared to do. His conduct with the Nizam — the Faithful Ally of the British — was unforgiveable. He even forgot that he was styled Viceroy only because of the link of princes with the Crown. Otherwise he would have been just a Governor General like in the other Dominions. After eliminating the princes and ceasing to be the Viceroy, he played his new role of Governor General with enthusiasm and actually planned and supervised the departure of his Indian troops to Kashmir.

Pandit Nehru, the PM, was indisposed at the time when Lashkars (Group of Tribesmen) from Pakistan had entered Kashmir in the hope of making that beautiful part of the world join its natural partner Pakistan. The situation there was of course the opposite of Hyderabad — a Hindu ruler with Muslim majority population. Nehru was perturbed by the news that his valley (his ancestors came from Kashmir) had been invaded. His friend Mountbatten consoled him; the airfield in Srinagar, by air, after commandering all the passenger aircrafts in India for this operation. I saw him supervising the loading at Safdarjang Airfield, in his light Khaki Naval battle uniform. Why the Lashkars did not capture the airfield and block the Banihal pass within 12 hours, when the journey from Rawalpindi to Srinagar only took 8 hours, in another story. A story again of personal ambitions and complete lack of control and direction on the part of the commanders of the Lashkars. I had some experience of it later in'48 and had to give orders to my commanders that they were not to employ the Lashkars without my personal approval; they were only good for harassment and not for pitched engagements.

I have cited the case of Kashmir because it is a good exampre of ill management of affairs in Pakistan compared to the well-planned Indian Police Action in Hyderabad. In Pakistan the C-in-C had not been consulted and some officers took leave and collected some men from their regiments, put them in plain clothes and in a rush left for Srinagar. Why they sat at Baramullah for 48 hours, when there wasn't a soul at the Srinagar airfield is beyond comprehension; lack of coordinated plan? In India it was different. It was a well-planned and well coordinated action brain-waved by former South East Asia Supreme Commander — Mountbatten.

Kashmir and Hyderabad are good examples for demonstrating the attitude of the two Rulers. The former was vascillating, feigning diplomatic sickness. It was a tragedy that his heir, his only son, was not on the scene at the time. He was abroad in connection with his ailment in his right leg which had haunted him for years. If he had been around he would have taken some positive action, I am sure and not been so indecisive. But then the two were entirely different people. The son more

like his mother, religious and firm in convictions. And it was not to be. His conduct later as Sadar-e-Riasat, demonstrates his balance and statesmanship.

The Nizam demonstrated his will. He stuck to his stand that after the Partition he was independent and wanted a treaty of friendship with the Faithful Ally (the British) and an understanding and association with the new Government of India on an equal basis as a sovereign ruler of Hyderabad. Sardar Patel had some kind of a 'five year' plan of relationship between the new Government of India to be and the Nizam. But the Nizam by now was wise to the intentions of both, the Government of India and the British. He had trust in neither. He held a meeting with his trusted inner circle and made his intentions clear and told his commander E 1 Edroos that if he wanted to go to Pakistan, he could, because he was not for useless bloodshed. What happened everyone knows. The Prince of Berar had left Hyderabad and only turned up after the surrender. He paid for that. He was not to succeed his father as Nizam. Osman Ali Khan made his eldest grandson Prince Mukkaram Jah his heir; the grandson of the last Sultan of Turkey, son of the Sultan's only daughter.

In Kashmir when the raiders arrived on the scene the Ruler panicked and signed accession to India, believing it to be the end. In Hyderabad the Ruler stood his ground, insisted on his stand being accepted and let the Indian Army commit slaughter of his unarmed subjects. When he died he was a martyr. One cannot help being sorry for this frugal humble Nizam. He fell in the manner that he did by the same weaknesses as the others of his order allowing himself to be isolated by sychophants, and courtiers rather than helped by able outspoken advisers. He hardly ever left his domains and his ministers, though able people, were not travelled people, and were seemed out of touch with events in the world. I wonder if any paper had been prepared for the cabinet about the effects of the war and how it would affect the Hyderabad state for him. Surely they must have known about the Congress Party's manifesto which clearly stated that the Princely states were to be eliminated as early as possible. Had the Paramount Power (British — the Viceroy) warned them of this? A large majority of them thought that the British would never go. They gave generously towards the War effort, in the hope of reaping the harvest. The Nizam was the biggest giver. What did he get in the end — a let down of the most shameful order. The Nizam was also disappointed by the rough and shody treatment that the great grandson of Queen Victoria gave him, the Viceroy took 6 weeks to reply an urgent letter from the Nizam.

Books have been written about Mountbatten by command. He was a great chap for P.R. 'If you tell a lie often enough people will start believing it as truth'. His altering the Radcliffe Award to give contiguity to Jammu and Kashmir State with India by giving Gurdaspur District, a majority Muslim area to India, was great injustice to Pakistan and the cause of all these conflicts between these two neighbouring countries. Of course it is quite evident now that he did not believe that Pakistan would last for long: his remark after the debacle of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) is proof of that — 'I predicted that' was what he said. In attempts at taking Kashmir we lost East Pakistan, where the Muslim League was formed in 1906. The instability in this subcontinent is due to the hasty and prejudiced actions of the last Viceroy. It may be a harsh charge for some but not for those who have suffered deeply.

My friend Auk used to have tears in his eyes whenever this subject was touched upon, which was very rare. Eventually he left England and settled in Marrakash and died there in '81 and lies buried in the International War Cemetry in Casablanca. He never wrote a line on his India where he spent most of his life

among the Indians. He knew too much. He did not know where to start. The end broke his heart. He was the maker of the modern Indian Army. His last task was to break this Army between India and Pakistan. When he heard that I was writing a book about Soldiering in India and Pakistan, when my wife and I were driving him back to his Club, The Seniors, he said 'I wish you had told me before I destroyed my notes only last month, you could have used them. Finish it quickly I live from meal to meal'. Why Auk here, some might ask? Because like the Nizam he also died with a broken heart—dividing the Army that he had created. The Nizam also saw his Domain (modern Hyderabad that one saw was his creation) torn to pieces by the new Paramount Power. Both lie in peace today honoured for what they had done for their Domains. As I have said earlier some where, Hyder Ali is the only one who appreciated the sea power of the British. It may have been possible for the Nizams to get an outlet on the East Coast from the British on the pretext of the link with West Coast and Madina. A suitable outlet could have been given at the mouths of the Godavery and Kistnah Rivers flowing throughout in the Nizam's territory, discharging north and south of Musalipatnum, on the east coast.

But I doubt if the British would have agreed. The intrigue of the Nizam against Mysore and against Marhattas, was a great service to the British and they accepted him as Ally. But I am not so sure if the two brilliant Wellesley brothers would have considered an outlet to the international highway of water advisable to such a big native prince. History is teaching us that the Nawabs, the Maharajas, the Nizams, and the Peshwas excelled in the art of intrigue, and were not clear of their strategic aims leave alone the national interest, which in that period and atmosphere did not exist. And if they did, they were restricted to self-interest.

When the Nizam realised what was coming, he tried to get a passage to the sea. But it was too late. He may have got it when the British were under pressure from Tippu in Mysore and Marhattas in Central India with their headquarters at Poona.

It is surprising to note that the Muslim invaders, after the Aryans, into India, completely neglected the use of naval power. It may be hindsight but it is difficult to believe and to find the reason why soldiers like Shahjahan and Aurangzeb who had expanded their empire to Burma and Andamans never thought of having a naval fleet, and yet they made the fullest use of the rivers which were available. I wonder what would have happened if the Moghuls had developed an efficient fleet. They were content to ask the Portuguese to assist in the sea passage of Muslim pilgrims to Makkah. The only reason I can accept is that they came from land with no tradition or association with water. Even the Spanish and Portuguese fleets suffered at the hands of the people who were Islanders and learnt their art of battle first with sea itself and then with their adversaries at sea. The people to come to India were Arabs before they embraced Islam. Later Muslim fleets came and settled, Junagarh state is an example — the founder was a Captain of ship. Sachin to whom my cousin was married is another example. There were so many of them; 135 to be exact, in Gujrat and Kathiawar.

The British had their own subtle ways of keeping the princes at loggerheads with one another through their conferring titles and gun salutes to this class. I, during World War-II, had a small experience of these jealousies when the prince canvassed to go abroad to earn a ribbon. Hyderabad had its own Nawabies. In 1818 British encouraged Subedar of Oudh and Deccan to elevate themselves as Kings. Hyderabad had refused but Oudh accepted and became the King of Oudh. This was to belittle the title of King who resided in the Red Fort on a pension from the British in Delhi. Ultimately the aim of the British was to finish for ever the House of Taimur and occupiers of the peacock throne, from the Red Fort.

The titles of Nawabs and Rajas were also diluted and lowered by conferring these on non-princely individuals in recognition of their services to the British. Muslim became Nawabs and Hindus/Sikhs became Rajas. The only one who became Maharaja was the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, Sir Kishan Prashad — the only non-royal who was conferred the order of GCIE (Grand Commander of the Indian Empire) which 95% of the Indian princes did not possess. He was also entitled to 19 guns salute in British territory. In spite of all this, special favours to Hyderabad — the Nizam was despatched in 1947, because it did not suit the British interest any longer. Such are the ways of Rulers, big or small.

I really do think he was great in so many ways, even in his tightfistedness. He spent nothing on himself but millions on the poor. When he came to the throne the state was bankrupt. During his reign it was flourishing. He gave millions during the War to the Allied Cause, as a friend. He did not have to. And what was he paid with in return?

It is this injustice to this prince that makes me write in this strain. He appointed his eldest grandson as his heir — the son of the Prince of Berar, Prince Mukarram Jah (Barkat to his friends). I am sure he is conscious of his heritage. He lives now in Australia, near Perth, but he is still the hope of all the Muslims that still live in Hyderabad, if not beyond.

I have happy memories of the Prince of Berar. But it was disappointing to see him not living upto the standard set by his ancestors. He was married to a charming lady, the daughter of the last Khalifa, Sultan of Turkey. She was an accomplished person and brought her two sons up as normal princes and persons. Not an easy task in the environment in which she herself had to live. The Prince of Berar could be quite amusing and even witty, but with a touch of vulgarity. Last time I met him was at the Savoy Hotel in London where I was also staying in early July 1947. This is when I was returning to India from Washington to opt for Pakistan. He was kind enough to ask me to tea when he heard that I was there. He asked me about my welfare which was kind of him. But when he harped on his old theme of when his father would go, it was sad.

'Tell me Nawab, what is the retiring age of a General?' 'O, I don't know Sir it depends on circumstances and the General in question; but normally he should retire when he is about 65 years of age'. Came another question, 'What if he doesn't retire what do you do then?' Sir I don't know whom you are referring to but in our Army the question of not agreeing to retire just does not arise'. 'But if it did?' Came the next question. 'Then Sir he will be removed I think on medical grounds', he chuckled. 'But my old man is overage and he won't go...' I was so disappointed when he said that. I replied, 'Sir he is not a General he is a king, a sovereign, and they do not retire they just pass away when the call comes'. I got up to take leave. He also got up, 'you have not answered my question Nawab'. I said nothing, made my Salaam and after a handshake left the room.

I went back to my room and reflected. How did this cultured lady Princess Durrushahwar, the only daughter of the Sultan of Turkey, live her life in the environment that she had to after her marriage. She certainly maintained the dignity and the grace of her House. The last time I was taken to the Royal Palace in Istanbul on the banks of Bosphorus was in 1970 when I had gone there for a conference. Her painting was still hanging where it had been before. It was unfinished because the Sultan left in a hurry in 1924. When the Curator saw me in front of the painting he asked me if I knew her. 'Yes I have the honour of knowing her'. He was insisting on my taking note of the size of chandelier that was hanging from the ceiling. 'the largest in the world Excellency' said the Curator. "I have seen one

just as large if not larger in Gwalior Palace — an elephant was taken upto the roof to ensure that it could take the weight'. I told him. He was surprised.

I must admit that I had some difficulty in falling asleep that night because I was so upset about what the Prince had said about his father, a man who had done so much for his State in every field particularly in the educational field. He had created the Osmania University in which he had given priority to Sciences. He had the science books translated into Urdu, encouraging Urdu as the language of his kingdom and sending students abroad to gain advanced knowledge in science subjects. He was the one man of all I knew who understood the importance of science in the future. The work done at the Osmania is the biggest memorial to him.

The only reason I can think of for the Muslims in the sub-continent losing the importance of science in the affairs of the world has been their going astray from the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s.) turning mosque into churches and the Imams introduced science to the West but later changed their course due to indulgence in things forbidden.

I am not at all hesitant to point out that most of the teachings of the 'Pandits' of Islam has been divorced from science and even against it. I have heard with my own ears a Priest telling the audience in a mosque that anyone who believes that man has landed on the moon is a Kafir. No wonder we are begging others for knowledge today. After hearing that I had walked out of the mosque and have never been in it again.

As far as I am concerned the only book is the Qur'an-ul-Mobin (a clear simple book) in the finest Arabic revealed to the Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.s.) and all others are two hundred years after his demise including the collections of Ahadith, like the four books of Christians after Jesus.

The following verses of the Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan are indicative of his thinking:

Nasheb sey hi mila hai faraz — rahne dey,
Bara-e-sheikh ada-e-namaz — rahne dey.
Nakar tu fash zara aql sey bhi kam to ley,
Mijaz he men haqiqat ka raz — rahne dey. (OSMAN)

From this descent I have gained this ascent — let it be,
Performance of prayer for the sake of the Sheikh — let it be.
Do not reveal, use your wisdom and intelligence,
Leave the secret of reality, to your intelligence. (S.A.)

Now I understand why he cried during prayer in Bagh-e-Aam mosque that day.

The last years of his life were spent as a recluse, in making charitable trusts for all those who had served him. Everyone's name was included, not even missing the Bhishtees (water carriers) who daily watered his flower pots which ran into hundreds if not thousands, or the Khakrobes (sweepers) who swept the roads and paths measuring miles, within the palace walls.

One day he received a note to say that the replacement of his blanket was going to cost Rs. 18. He wrote and said that the purchase may be delayed because he was running tight on his budget and the present one would do for another year. Soon after that came another note from another department that a request had come for the repair of the outer courtyard of Jamia Masjid (main mosque), the cost being one lakh of rupees for one third of the floor space. He wrote 'if repair is necessary, then the whole court should be repaired, and 3 lakh may be granted'. This is the kind of man he was. The complete opposite to his father who had

drained the treasury completely on his personal expenses. Both were generous but Osman Ali Khan was very strict with himself.

He is still remembered by thousands and thousands for his benevolence. The people he taxed were the rich and the spendthrifts. His poetry is recited not in Hyderabad alone, but all over India, particularly in Muslim areas, to whom he was also the Aala Hazrat — the Exalted Majesty. Surely this is the way to be remembered.

Readers will note that daily functions in the Palace were conducted through notes and not by conversations. My mother and brother exchanged notes on important matters, to avoid any unpleasantness that may arise. My grand-father and father, I understand, addressed each other in third person; it was the etiquette of the time, to keep (Hijab — modesty) in between. One never spoke to elders before being spoken to. Some may consider this very odd and unnatural in human behaviour, but I think much more pleasant than the shouting matches that I have witnessed in the modern society of today.

Dawa bohat tha apni liyaquat ka jin ko aaj
Afsos hai keh koi bhi khidmat na kar sake (OSMAN)
Those who claimed so much of their worth and ability today
Sad, that they were unable to do any service today. (S.A.)

I think this is a tribute to all the talented and cultured advisers that he had assembled around him in the last years of his reign.

I cannot conclude the story of this most extraordinary man without saying something about the last days of his state and how it was bifurcated to destroy its identity of nearly 100 thousand square miles of the great Muslim state of the Muslim Asaf Jahi dynasty of the Nizams. But the Saga is already too long. I must again point out that this is not a book of history. The scope of this Saga is limited — the ramblings of a person fortunate and lucky, who has ventured into the past to escape, even if it be for a while, from the present. The intention is not to open old scars. They have left enough marks, which should be enough to learn from, for the future.

To explain any further, the following would require elucidation to understand fully :

THE PARTITION

1.	Speech by Clement R. Attlee, British Prime Minister, in House of Commons, announcing target date for transfer of power.	20 February 1947
2.	Speech by Attlee in House of Commons outlining procedure to learn decision of inhabitants of Muslim majority areas on Partition and advancing date of transfer of power.	3 June 1947
3.	Broadcast by Mountbatten to announce above decision of British Government.	3 June 1947
4.	Speech by Attlee in House of Commons on Indian Independence Bill.	10 July 1947

5.	Act passed by British Government to set up Dominions of India and Pakistan and to detach Aden from them.	18 July 1947
6.	Joint Council of two Dominions to supervise division of armed forces and military stores and provide for general adminsitration by Supreme Commander till 31 March 1948.	11 August 1947
7.	Tribunal to make awards in respect of partition disputes referred to it before 1 January 1948.	12 August 1947
8.	Four Joint Councils to consider matters relating to partitioning of India and Provinces.	12 August 1947
9.	Authority for Reserve Bank of India to manage currency of Pakistan and make Indian notes legal tender in Pakistan till 30 September 1948.	14 August 1947
10.	Awards by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman, Boundary Commissions, on Pakistan boundaries in Bengal, Assam and the Punjab.	12 & 13 August 1947

HYDERABAD

11.	Nizam of Hyderabad informs Crown Representative that he would watch relations between India and Pakistan before entering into organic relation with either Dominion.	8 August 1947
12.	Mountbatten informs Nizam that Indian Government would not hurry Nizam.	12 August 1947
13.	Nizam states that he would not consider acceding to either Dominion but would execute standstill agreement with India.	29 November 1947
14.	Indian Government accepts standstill agreement.	29 November 1947
15.	Terms of above agreement.	29 November 1947
16.	Speech by Patel in Dominion Parliament on standstill agreement with Hyderabad.	29 November 1947
17.	Ministry of States informs Prime Minister of Hyderabad of specific violations of standstill agreement and asks for remedial action.	23rd March, 1948
18.	Prime Minister of Hyderabad makes counter-complaints and rebuts charges against Hyderabad.	5 April 1948

The Oldest uniform



Self in the full dress uniform of 28th Madras light Cavalry. At the time the picture was taken at Bolarum (Deccan) 1939, it was 144 years old

speech by him in the House of Commons (3 June 1947) outlining the procedure to ascertain the decision of the Muslims (in Muslim majority areas) and advancing the date of the transfer of power from June 1948 to August 1947 were indeed big decisions. It is unfortunate that Mr. Attlee considered himself an expert on India after his brief visit to the country with the Simon Commission in 1928.

Enough has been written to illustrate that whether they were Big or Small they were all tarred with the same brush. Surrounded by their Durbarees (courtiers) they were apt to live in a world of their own. Even the fact that wars have always brought about changes seems to have been forgotten. The manifesto of the Congress, the biggest political party, at its meeting of A.I.C.C. in 1938 where it categorically confirmed that all states without exception, had to be eliminated and annexed, was not taken seriously. During the discussion of the India Independence Bill in London it had been made abundantly clear by the Attorney General who had said 'This at least can be said with certainty that we do not propose to recognize the states — that is the Indian States — as separate international entities, on 15 August when the bill comes into operation'.

But there were some who thought that the British would never go, not after winning the war, and that is why they had contributed generously towards the war efforts. Lord Mountbatten's efforts to get the Nizam maximum concessions, but advising accession, had failed. The King's letter of sympathy but demonstrating helplessness in the matter, was received and acknowledged.

What is surprising to me to this day, is that with all the talented advisers around him and he himself (the Nizam) an astute person, now did he miss the point that the Congress Government was committed to the elimination of the princely states, small or big. The princely order was to be destroyed.

The Farman of the Nizam of the 23 November, 1949 was followed by the Agreement with the Nizam. On the 25 January 1950 it was signed by Mir Osman Ali Khan — Nizam — VII and V.P. Menon Secretary, Ministry of States. How the mighty had fallen. The saying of the Faqir (Saint) had come true, 'Hyderabad will only have seven Nizams'. Hence the symbol of seven loaves of bread on the Coat of Arms of Hyderabad State. The Faqir had been given seven loaves of bread when he had asked for some provision for himself and his followers; so went the story in Hyderabad.

CONCLUSION

When I made up my mind to write this book, it was not easy to decide where to start from. It could not be written in Pakistan because an atmosphere, 'which is essential for such a subject,' could not be created there. There are not many places in India either, where one can write on this subject today — I was in a dilemma. I could only pray and ask 'the Being'. I had no one else. Soon my prayers were answered. I had a letter from a life-long friend, an Indian Princess and Maharani Rajmata who knew of my intention to write this book and asked me to come to Jaipur and write. I went to India to attend the wedding of one of my grand nephews and there in Lucknow I met my old friend Jai Atal who had been the Indian Ambassador in Pakistan and his charming wife Ganga and they too invited me to Jaipur — 'Why don't you stay with us and write here?' When I went to Jaipur I asked my friend if I could stay for a while with the Atals. She being what she is, so

gracious, smiled and said, 'Yes, while I am away from Jaipur, you may'. So here I am in their charming house Atal Ban, with its spacious gardens, writing my notes about the princes of India I knew, in this city of Jaipur — the Capital of Rajasthan — the land of the Princess. 'The Being' has again been so kind.

Today I find that there is a tendency on the part of the historians in the sub-continent to twist history in order to project their particular nationalism. But this attempt to influence history writing has not met with much success.

An Indian (Hindu) writer wanted to go back to the tenth century to discover signs of Hindu resistance to Muslim rule. Which would have seemed to imply that Hindus were Indian and Muslims foreigners — an assumption that would have undermined the Congress Party's idea of India as a secular democracy.

In 1909, a veteran nationalist, Savarkar published a history of the Mutiny entitled 'The War of Independence'. That landed him in the Andaman Islands (a prison island in the Indian Ocean where hard labour and long sentence prisoners were sent). And the book was banned. The British (Minto 1907-1912) had produced the separate electorate and Minto-Morley Reforms, but this was too much and too early.

Dr. Mujumdar, a veteran Indian historian wanted to give a rejoinder and wanted to start his 'freedom movement' from 1870 but there was controversy on the title and date and it was considered that the 'movement' should begin from 1857. He produced in 1957 his account of 1857 under the title 'The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857'. In it he had argued that what began as a mutiny — the Sepoys against their employers — ended in local outbreaks of violence. In the ninth volume work on the 'History and Culture of the Indian People' financed by G.D. Birla, Dr. Mujumdar reiterated his argument that there had been nothing like a national war of independence. In his seventh volume (published in 1974) he strongly disagreed with the new trend in the history of the Muslims in India. No one saw it as a conscious attempt to 'rewrite the whole chapter of the bigotry and intercourse of the Muslim Rulers towards Hindu Religon.'

I am repeating this here because the origin of the Princes of India is connected indirectly with the decline of the Moghul Empire, and Aurangzeb I portrayed by most as the man responsible for it. People harp on foreign Moghul rule forgetting that if Aurangzeb was foreign because of his foreign ancestors then Northern India has been under foreign rule since the second millennium B.C. when the Aryans first made their appearance.

Consideration should be given to socio-economic factors. It is pleasant to note that Dr. Sharma and Dr. Ghandra reveal the extent of Rajput participation at high administrative levels in the Moghul administration well into the first half of the eighteenth century. They do not attribute the decline of the Moghul power to the adoption of specifically Muslim policies by the last great Emperor Aurangzeb. His expansion into the Deccan prompted him to give ever more appointments to local men for political as well as for military reasons.

If the expansion into the Deccan was too expensive for the Moghuls then the expansion of the Marhattas in the north was no less expensive for them. Their defeat at Panipat in 1761, on the same hostorical ground, where Babar founded the Moghul Empire in 1526 and his grandson Akbar at the age of fourteen consolidated it in 1556, smashed all ambitions of a Marhatta empire in the subcontinent. And soon the caste rivalries saw the end of the Brahmin Peshwas by the non-Brahmin components of Shivaji's hordes, where he had founded Marhatta power by enlisting support of a variety of castes. And the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao in 1773 saw the first intervention of the British in Marhatta policies.

The Marhattas never forgave the Rajputs for standing by in 1761. They 'occupied' most of the southern and northern Rajputana and took Chauth (one fourth of the revenue) from them including the mighty Udaipur Rana. It was the British who relieved them of this yoke later. They did this by intervening in disputed successions, but the British had driven their thin end of the vedge; and eventually replaced Marhattas in Rajputana and finished them off dividing them into Principalities by the early nineteenth century — making them sign 'submissive' subordination treaties.

Therefore at the end of it all — after the Mutiny — emerged on the map of India only two colours; the red (British preferred to call it pink, after what happened in Russia in 1917) of the British and the yellow of the native states. The green of the Muslims had disappeared in spite of the biggest state (Hyderabad) having a Muslim Ruler. This was natural because the majority of the population of the country was Hindu and the Muslims were only a ruling minority. Why the Nizam, the Ruler of Hyderabad adopted yellow as the colour of his Dastar (head dress), I could never find out, but true to the tradition of the House of Chin Qulich Khan — Asif Jah-I, they went with the wind. The Muslim Rulers may have had the satisfaction of the green colour on the map if they had not been so conspicuous in cutting the throat of their co-Muslim brother rulers.

We have a famous saying in the sub-continent quoted today as well :

> **Jaffer az Bengal Sadiq az Deccan**
> **Nang-e-Quom, Nang-e-Deen, Nang-e-Watan.**
> *Jaffer of Bengal, Sadiq of Deccan*
> *Shame of the Nation, shame of the Faith and*
> *Shame of the Motherland.* (S. A.)

Jaffer refers to Mir Jaffer, who let down his master at the battle of Buxer in 1764 and arranged to have Emperor Shah Alam-II in his camp there. This and the betrayal of Tippu by Sadiq Ali Khan, were the foundation stone of the British Raj in India — Bengal fell and the Emperor became a prisoner and then a pensioner, and so did Mysore.

Sadiq — is Sadiq Ali Khan, the Nizam of Hyderabad who sided with the British against Tippu Sultan the brilliant soldier and statesman, who clearly foresaw the intentions of the British and wrote to the Shah of Iran and the Sultan of Turkey for help. He warned them that after his fall the road would be clear to Delhi and it would be the beginning of the end for the Muslims in India. He was proved correct.

The British knew that Tippu had to be tackled first and then others — the Marhattas. They already had the Nizam in their pocket and always reminded him of the threat from the surrounding Hindu Marhattas. It is for this help against Tippu Sultan that the Nizam of Hyderabad earned for himself the title of His Exalted Highness — the Faithful Ally of the British Government.

History is ironic, in 1947-48 the Nizam was fully repaid for these services. A police action took place in mid-September against Hyderabad when the Indian Army invaded the territories of the Faithful Ally of the British after the British Governor General of Independence (Mountbatten) had left on 19th June without resolving the issue. Pakistan, (a Muslim homeland) in some form or name, had been inevitable since 1909 by Minto's Separate Electorate Act. The Muslims have no one to blame but themselves. The Moghul Empire was probably destined to disappear anyway — it had been there long enough and Akbar's Deen-i-Ilahi, though well-meant, but started the imbalance between the Ruler and the ruled.

I had resolved many times that I must write about these Princes who were removed so ignominiously on the eve of independence and many times things happened that prompted me away in other directions. I had never intended to go to political platforms, where one addressed thousands and thousands of people who shout 'naras' (slogans) in your praise or in protest but were least concerned about what you say. To them it was a 'tamasha' (fun-fair) by a statesman giving advice or a politician rabble-rousing or a fiery mullah giving his sermon in a vehement fashion, reminding the audience of their duty of Jehad (Holy War) — cutting the throats of 'Kafirs' (non-believers) which meant nearly 2000 million people if not more. Has climate got anything to do with it? Ayub Khan in one of his prophetic moods proclaimed that democracy could only function in cooler climates. Tunku Abdul Rehman of Malaysia took strong exception to that because his country never had any winter and the adjoining jungles were swarming with communist guerillas. And yet it is our country where summer is so hot that as one poet has said:

Gar aankh say nikkel kay thehr jai rah mein
Par jain laakh aabley pai nighah mein
If sight were to leave the eye and stopped on the way
Her feet would have hundreds of blisters straightaway. (S. A.)

In that kind of heat one can only stay inside and take shelter in the dark of deep tehkhanas (basements) and high ceilinged roofs and just wait for the sun to take its daily dip in the sea of the night and then come out in the dark to draw cool rays through imagination from the icy flakes of the galaxy of the stars in the bowl of the 'sharbet' of the sky. During such periods limbs don't move, even the breath sometimes evaporates but one thing goes on — the mind. That element of the body is above such conditions of environment and it is in such conditions that thoughts take flight and one reaches where one wants to without any hindrance. It is people of such areas who, through their flight of thought, have produced the 'Ishwar' or 'the Being', without seeing, for humanity to grasp and in its belief set their direction and course in this unchartered world, in which we were all destined to play our role according to a certain pattern, like that of a magnetic field, set by 'the Magnet' — 'the Being'.

Today I get peace in the quiet hours of the dawn, when the mind and with it thought, seems to be separate from the body, before both return to the routine of daily chores. The moment I make contact with any individual in the morning that world of thought where I could be, where I wanted to be, and all what I wanted to see, is disturbed. And all the treasures that I had gained in the moonlight or in the dark when lit by flashes of lightning, or by seeing some hill-top struck by dawn or the glow of the desert sunset when that huge disc of nature, we call the sun, dips in the sea, sizzling and cooling and glowing and draws on the day that curtain of glow, which lifts the curtain of night, to start the daily act of life. I have enjoyed this always — always alone. It is all this that makes me write.

Some would say I am rambling in my dreams. Of course I am. How else could I write such a Saga of a people who ruled two fifths of India and over 150 million people and yet who disappeared without a whimper.

Life has changed in our world too — we have gained self-government. Under this system we are supposed to govern ourselves. But it is not so easy, having been chained and caged for so long to behave as one should in freedom. Captivity leaves a mark, a mark of its own, which takes generations to remove.

And in that period we behaved like unchained and uncaged animals — worse, for we are Ashraf-ul-Makhlooqat (the noblest and most superior of the creatures), of the Creator.

To remain sane was very important as I love life and I would not like to experience what it looks like from behind the net of madness into which the present rat race, after the goddess of money is driving every sane man. To do that, to remain sane, I decided to go back for a while into the past, to record the events of those wonderful days of youth when one rode fast, any steed, over any jump, in the race after anything and anywhere considered worthwhile at the time, sometimes with open eyes and at other times closed to avoid the splashes of the mud which one sometimes encountered on the way. The twenties, thirties and even some years of the forties were full of fun. I flew over many places and rubbed shoulders with many people. I saw the world during the day and by night. I observed a lot, I heard a lot, I enjoyed a lot, that is why today I miss all that. Some people and some places left a mark, they are niches in life today, from which I measure my moments and value my time spent, on events and happenings, that made my life, for myself, to help me, to give me hope, in the future, and assist me in remaining sane in order to enjoy every moment which still remains to be lived. What you have read, in this book, is the story told to oneself by a traveller who travelled alone in pursuit of something, something that he hasn't been able to define yet. Whether he will ever be able to discover that 'something' remains to be seen — the great thing is to have created a challenge for oneself. It is the self that creates most things, for oneself, through the power of 'the Being' that dwells within everyone which some call soul or spirit. The book is the result of the resolve — to remain active, sane and positive in this mad world.

The political history of India until the supremacy of the British who gradually took over in the sub-continent, had been divided up into local kingdoms since antiquity; kingdoms or principalities whose borders fluctuated with the fortune of the ceaseless wars that the princes waged against each other. Generally, however, the subject Houses, were never completely abolished and would seize their autonomy once more at the first sign of weakness in the central authority.

The pattern of Indian history resembled a jigsaw puzzle of ever-changing shapes. The pattern at the centre of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent 'the peg' was the more stable and its influence on the periphery was more effective than that of a pattern in the far flung corners of the 'peg'. Most of the pleasures on the pattern came from the North-West of the 'peg', new migrations from cold areas looking for fertile lands. The kingdoms that emerged were therefore all of alien stock, even the Rajputs who considered themselves from the Sun, and Moon and claimed descent from mythical heroes of the ancient epics, were alien to the land. They all ruled the original inhabitants who gradually got pushed down the 'peg' in the South. As the invasions increased so the movement increased southwards, till even the Rajputs in their scrubby, rocky inhospitable dessert areas, difficult for the conquerors to subdue, started considering themselves as the custodians of the 'Peg'.

The pattern changed further as the new arrivals used the sea routes particularly on the western boundaries of the 'Peg', and alien (Muslim) kindgoms started establishing themselves in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By that time the Muslim kingdoms were well established in the north-west, eastern and central-northern areas of the 'Peg'. It was during this period that the linking up of the Muslim conquerors took place and pressure increased on the isolated areas of Rajput principalities.

The Muslim (Moghul) pattern was established on most of the areas of the 'Peg' by the middle of the sixteenth century and by the end of the seventeenth, most of

the 'Peg' including the area upto the Oxus in the north-west, and even parts of Burma in the east was under the banner of Aurangzeb Alamgir (the conqueror of the world). It is this fact and the title that is irksome to some of the Western and non-Muslim historians.

The pressures became less from the land routes as the Westerners (Europeans) started looking for trade in the East and used their sea-power for this purpose. This power gave them more flexibility and security in their exploits to come and go. They gradually got more involved in the affairs of the 'Peg' to protect and enlarge their trade and later to carry the white man's burden and show the native the right path.

During this vast cyclic process, new dynasties were born, old ones died out and the ancient alternated through the centuries between phases of grandeur and oblivion. A new dynasty arose each time a new conquering element either managed to carve for himself a principality from the territory of the weakened local leader, or again when the local representative of a weakening central authority became powerful enough to appropriate for himself the territory that had been placed in his charge.

Before the arrival on the scene of the British East India Company, most of the area of the 'Peg' had been under Muslim domination from twelfth century onwards. And a large number of native (Hindu) princes flourished under their rule, now termed 'repression'. One would never have heard of them today if they had not been patronized by their rulers, especially the Moghuls.

No one hears or reads of the Muslim Rulers (Nawabs) today who gave the title of 'Maha' to the local Rajas of the time; thus elevating them to Maharajas.

They also introduced the style of Sawai, for a few of their favoured Rajput Rajas, who were connected by marriage to the Royal House of the Moghuls. Sawai is an Arabic word meaning 'Superior'. It was in that meaning that it was conferred on those superior beings who had the intimacy of relationship with the Moghul throne, and is not meant to be what is commonly believed today — one and a quarter.

What does it matter now that one calls oneself Nawab or Raja when these titles have today become part of their names. The world is being levelled — good for the world. The new recognition is not of the past or present but of the bank balance one has and where. A completely new class of rich nobility has taken the place of old nobility.

The names of the ones they heard were those of sportsmen. Agha Khan the First was known abroad because of his horses which had done well on the race courses there. He had won the Derby. The only Indian ruling Prince who won the Derby was Rajpipla, whose horse "Windsor Lad" won the Derby in 1932 when I was at Sandhurst and saw the race. The Polo players, the Cricket players, were the ones who were more important and known to the sporting English. And now of course the Squash players. Though Agha Khan was not an Indian ruling prince yet he was a great International figure, a prince with no territory but a following that resided in practically every country. The great Agha Khan I admired when I was small was the son of prince Hassan Ali Khan, born in Karachi on 2 November 1877. He was only 8 years old when his father died. He was brought up by his mother. His ancestors migrated from Arabia to Iran and from there came to India where they settled for good at Karachi, where most of his followers, the Shia-Khoja Ismailia community was also settled. When I met him he was Sir Sultan Mohammad Shah Agha Khan the Third.

From 1902 till the third Round Table Conference in London in 1932 he was the leading Muslim figure and his voice was the most heard and respected voice in the

cause of Muslim welfare throughout the world. He was the most known Muslim international figure of his time. He died at Geneva in July 1957 and was laid to rest at Aswan in Egypt; a Pharaoh of his community he certainly was. His elder son Prince Ali Khan was a friend of mine. And what a fine man he was. In the latter years of his life he was Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN in New York and did an excellent job in that capacity — his successors are still reaping the harvest.

I have the pleasure of knowing his second son too Prince, Sadar-ud-Din who has just been appointed as the UN Economic Coordinator for Afghanistan, UN Programme for reconstruction of Afghanistan, a most arduous task. But he is the most suitable choice after his vast experience as UN's Refugee Commissioner earlier in the Middle East and other parts of the world for many years. I have mentioned Agha Khan here because he played an important role in the political affairs of India as a Muslim representative before others, like Mr. Jinnah who followed him.

Today one hears of Maharajas and not Nawabs abroad because of the nostalgic association of the British and others with the Raj. The Raj (rule) was taken by the British from the Muslims and not from the Rajas who never ruled India as a whole. A large number of these ruling Princes came from humble beginnings. Take the big five, the 21 gunners. Except for Hyerabad (a Muslim) whose ancestry can be traced back to some noble names from Samarkand without any manipulation, the others including Mysore, who was from an obscure Brahmin line, picked up by the British to replace the Muslim ruler, the Sultan Tippu. The new ruler was deprived of the State without much ceremony for many years till it was handed back, after imposing some tough conditions, by a Governor General (Lord Ripon) who had played Cricket on Etons's grounds and had learnt his fairplay and all that. The other states, all came from humble beginnings. But there is nothing to get upset about or to feel less elated, because it proves that in those days of adventure and free for all, it was the most talented, the most audacious and courageous and industrious person, who came to the front. The old ones became degenerate, became degraded if not altogether destroyed. This is true of most old names today. It is the struggle for survival that makes a man. The history of India and over hundred million people, was written off by a stroke of the pen as 'outdated', I heard with my own ears the Crown representative explaining this at a select party. And the remark 'Good riddance' — after their fate had been decided and a line drawn across their page with a flourish.

What motivated me to write this Saga? to remind this Elite Minority of its past, of its heritage? Yes. But not entirely. What created the thrust to write in the manner in which I have written? The kind of remarks passed quoted above by those who owed their loyalty to the Prince more than to others in India. There was a Viceroy only because of this Elite Minority — the Princes. Mine was a small state but a state all the same. They were all the same fraternity. When an attempt was made to organise them in some orderly manner, absorbing the small in British or Princely territories after paying them suitable compensation, and the large ones, into some coherent form, it was whiffed away by the Queen, their 'Mother' to whom they were her dear children and she proved it by her behaviour. She was surrounded by them at home. 'No one is to be touched even if it be the size of a handkerchief', was what she had noted.

Another attempt was made by two brilliant brains of the Conservative Party to do something for these 'helpless noble people living in a world of their own'. This took the form of an Act — the Attachment Act of 1944. By this Act small states were to be absorbed in the bigger ones either in Princely India or British India, in order to get the country ready for an eventual federation of India. Nothing came of this

idea due to lack of unity. There was a hue and cry. And the matter was dropped. With plausible explanations in London; the conscience had been satisfied. When the storm broke after the War in 1945 and an honest soldier (Wavell) was Viceroy who tried to do something for them he was snubbed by Whitehall. And a man was sent in his stead to prepare the gallows for these 565 poor victims, big or small to be hanged — for the services they had rendered to their Queen Mother and other Masters since 1858, and even earlier.

This story has not been written in a vacuum. Nature abhors a vacuum. This is written by the author who lives today in the country of his choice. Because he knew by experience, and the past history of the land, that the caste system of Hindu India — Hindustan, would never allow a casteless society of Muslims to live peacefully, in their own style, as there were elements still in India who considered the Muslims as invaders from the north-west, forgetting that they themselves were invaders — it was only a matter of when? Muslims had lived as rulers and could not have lived as equals with a disparity of 7 to 1. One only has to look around to see what is happening in Fiji, Sri Lanka, Cyprus and Africa today. I have never regretted coming to Pakistan. And I have never given up my friendships and associations either, with those whom I left behind. This book I hope has illustrated that I have kept my friendship with the children of my friends, who have gone to peaceful abodes. This has not been easy. But then the pursuance of convictions has never been an easy task. This book itself would probably never have been written in the style that it is, if that had not been the case.

I am glad that it was my nephew, the Nawab of Pataudi, who said in simple and plain English in a book the other day "but it showed me that if they (princes) could not get together in 1947, there was no way they could have got together in 1970." His grandfather the Nawab of Bhopal resigned in disgust when he, after all his efforts, could not get the 'big gunners' together and when he saw his buddy Dickie Mountbatten bullying the princes to join the new Dominions, to come. Instead of trying to get them together he was pressurising them to join the new India forgetting that he was Viceroy only because he was a link between the Crown and the Princes. But it seems that he was a man in a hurry and had an engagement with some other destiny. 'We broke treaty after treaty' said Lady Vere Birdwood, echoeing her ache of conscience. 'I should not like to meet a Prince today'. She was so ashamed of the conduct.

The East India Company was dissolved on 12 August 1858 by a royal decree and the Princes were persuaded to sign individual treaties recognising Britain as the Supreme Power. The Viceroy was acting, the Princes were assured, on behalf of their good friend Queen Victoria. They were reminded continually that the treaties they had made were and would remain, inviolate. A cruel act indeed when they knew that they may not be in a position to do it one day.

Lord Wavell, a soldier and a man of great integrity, was the first one to move, rather belatedly, that the Princes should be warned that with Independence they would be in the hands of their own political governments. But the Princes had not taken it seriously. To the last day they were asking, 'are they really going?'.

Facts are proving that Lady Edwina was the moving spirit behind Dickie Mountbatten throughout his career. She was his Josephine. Her social work and her charming diplomacy made the Congress High Command support him to the fullest and in return Dickie backed the Congress to the hilt. He appointed Patel as Incharge of the Ministry of States with Menon as the Secretary three months before Independence — something unconstitutional. Through successful bluffing of Mr. Attlee by painting a gruesome picture of the affairs in India, Mountbatten had himself granted complete powers to act at his discretion without reference to the

Secretary of State. The Princes were sacrificed at the altar of India being kept within the Commonwealth at all costs.

We are all surprised that a man like Auchinleck was not selected for the difficult task of partitioning India and yet was given the equally difficult task of dividing the well-knit Army that had kept the British in India for nearly a hundred years. While Mountbatten did not have the pleasure of becoming a Supreme Governor General for both India and Pakistan, Auchinleck was accepted by both countries as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. It was Auchinleck himself, who resigned from this position when his task of dividing the Military assets was blocked by India, and Mountbatten was in no position to help in this regard. When he realised this, he left. Not only did he know India but he knew the ways of the Indians and their minds and what more, was loved and respected by the Army — the only really stable factor. If it hadn't been for this factor of stability, no Viceroy or Governor General could have done anything. Mountbatten himself styled Auchinleck as the greatest British Commander-in-Chief in India. But to Churchill he was 'Indian'. Therefore could not be trusted. 'Beastly people whom I hate', he had said once to Amery, Secretary of State for India. And never took any notice of what Viceroy Wavell wrote to him. Attlee had no time for him either because Wavell was asking for more time to save chaos and Attlee was in a hurry, to rebuild his battered England after the War.

The tensions we find are often caused by raising high expectations. It is usually at its more advanced stage in prosperous parts of the country, showing that more economic growth is no answer to our problems. The problem in India is of communal strife. In Pakistan it is now of ethnic clashes and Fiqa (colleges) clashes. The brotherhood of Islam and one nation theory has eroded and extinguished in the past 40 years; this has been due mainly to our lack of political leadership after Mr. Jinnah and the uncontrollable ambition of our first Commander-in-Chief; who was more a politician than a soldier — as proved by his record from 1940 onwards, when he was a Major at the Staff College, Quetta. During its existence of 40 years Pakistan has been ruled by military dictators for 25 years. In this period all institutions were automatically destroyed and so was healthy political leadership. A new privileged class came into being. Education received lowest priority. Funds allotted for it were the lowest in the world. No wonder we are split into ethnic groups today.

In India of today, twentieth century ideologies like progressive capitalism and even communism exist only in name. So those who fear for their traditional privileges and those whose expectations of a better life are frustrated, fall back on the ancient divisions of Indian community, society caste and creed, to fight their battles.

In Pakistan all institutions have been destroyed. Religious factions have been encouraged to keep the pot boiling. We keep forgetting, that we can exist without friends but we cannot live without neighbours. Iran is our neighbour, a very important one. Farsi, their language is one of the basics of our language Urdu. We write in the Persian-script. And we have millions who belong to Fiqa Jafferi (Shia). Many Shia and Sunnis are inter-married. We are bound to be anxious about that country. A nation has to be rebuilt in Pakistan, if the ideal of all Muslims becoming one nation is to be achieved. Muslim society is the most levelling society. Nothing will be achieved unless the strangle-hold of the professional politicians, bureaucrats, and contractors, the 'parasite class', who are sucking life blood out of the economy, is eradicated. That will mean dismantling the complicated economic controls which they have manipulated for their own ends.

The present ramshackle administration would have to be overhauled and the founding of modern institutions which can provide the environment, education, housing and health services needed to change the lives of all those who are still

condemned to live in squalor in remote and backward villages, will have to be undertaken. And Science is given its due importance in our education. Slaves when shackled, developed a sense of security from chains. But we are not slaves now. We have broken the apparent chain of steel, but the mind, the ultimate weapon, is still entangled in slavery, hence the dictator, one can rule, not being challenged by the way it is in non-slave mental societies. We have a long way to go yet.

This is not a book or a novel, but rather a Saga written from the author's journals, diaries, albums and memory, while it still serves. Written more for himself than anyone else, to remain sane, in this mad world in which he finds himself at this age. He hopes his children will have time to read what he has written and will appreciate what a fortunate person their father was to have led such a life among such people. It is the people that make the world and not the other way round. He hopes they will try and maintain the associations he had endeavoured to sustain, with his old friends and their children, a task that has not been easy, for various reasons, after Partition.

The latest experience after attending the much publicised wedding of the Prince from Kashmir with the Princess from Gwalior has been most encouraging. The affection, respect and consideration shown in this occasion by all the 'Highnesses', assembled in New Delhi and Gwalior, has encouraged the author in maintaining these associations.

The Elite Minority still retains those qualities which are essential for any civilized society. They have not lost their poise, their manners, their etiquette and their grace. They still show proper reverence to their elders and still return with care the salutations of the poor, with folded hands. The relationship between them and their past subjects was demonstrated amply when the wedding procession passed the streets of Gwalior and when the parents of the bridal couple thanked the people in large assemblages in the centre of the town. Bhaiya Scindia's (Maharaja Gwalior) behaviour at the wedding ceremony did spark the memories of the past. When a crowd of thousands and thousands entered the palace ground and was enthusiastically but also dangerously moving towards the pavilion where the religious ceremony was being held; when the Maharaja had gone to the mike and with folded hands addressed them and said, 'This is also your daughter's wedding. Allow it to be conducted with grace and dignity please....' I was a close witness to the electric effect it had. The crowd leaders came forward and asked the police not to interfere, saying, 'this is also our daughter's wedding.... please keep away. We can manage without you.' Not a soul moved. All the chitter chatter stopped and when, at the end, the hymn was sung, they all joined in; it was a scene to be seen and felt — it is impossible to describe.

I am about to end this long Saga. I have related this story with sadness in my heart. It has not been easy to write this story as I have stated earlier somewhere, but I do not apologise for repeating this. To me, as a student of history, it has been the tragedy of the highest order to observe that in spite of some very able rulers with foresight such as His Highness Gaekwar of Baroda and His Highness Nawab Hamidullah Khan of Bhopal, the princes found themselves, in the end, in a pathetic state, as they did — going into oblivion without even a whimper. If a 'Rajastan', "Prince-istan", "Khuldistan" or some kind of "Stan" (Representing the princes of India) could have been created by them for themselves, they could have played a great role in the sub-continent, — a cushion between a majority Hindu Bharat and a majority Muslim Pakistan.

Perhaps, and I say perhaps on purpose, this carnage that took place at the Partition in 1947 may have been avoided and the bitterness that stayed in the body politic of both these countries may not have been there. And by now they may

have found a via media and may have avoided these three wars of 1947, 1965 and 1971 that were fought between the two countries.

I am confident that the future of the Elite Minority is still bright, provided it takes its identity and strength from the people. There is still hope to be grasped. But it has to go to them and not vice versa. They have to make them (people) believe that their affairs lie safer in their, 'former rulers' hands rather than in the hands of others'. If film stars can become leaders in politics, the old stars have only got to make an effort and capture stardom again. Some would say that all is now spilled milk. But we should start all over again and this time learn from history, I have enjoyed writing this book and have learnt from writing it. The whole question today is, of justice, injustice, of corr ption and of accountability. This is very important in any society; especially when it is poor. It is important to keep writing as the events are happening, so that eventually the truth or the other point of view, besides the claims of the dictators, will come out. It is not easy. But is worth it. It helps to keep self-respect and hold one's head high. One sees one's own face in the mirror first. I write for those who still have some conscience left. As the Quran says to the Prophet, 'Do not waste your time on those who do not heed, it is only people of understanding who heed. Allah guideth not wrong-doing folks (3.3.86).

Some of the Princes I knew may not have been mentioned in this book. The book is already too long. I have every intention of writing about them. They have not been forgotten. How can they be, they were also the jewels of the same crown. They may have been smaller in size but many of them were much bigger at heart and in intellect. They have left their mark too.

If I were to be asked what could be their (The Elite Minority) contribution to the well-being of the sub-continent today, I would say without hesitation, that they with their background should contribute fully in the field of education. Not the education that is given everywhere but a New Education which will make man look far beyond the horizons of the present nationalistic, sectarian, cultural and racial considerations. It would not be easy, but nothing in the world has ever been easy when faced with the inevitable opposition from conservative elements that exist to constructive changes.

Time has come when institutions beyond their ideology of 'church', 'temple', etc. must not become or remain an anomaly. Institutions to bridge all racial and cultrual differences and to acknowledge the equality of all peoples, regardless of sex and class must not be regarded as virtual impossibilities.

Today the whole world is an armed camp and money is being poured into deadly weapons of mass destruction as though it was limitless and beyond exhaustion. Surely there must be something wrong somewhere for mankind to reach such a state of insanity as to find so much pleasure in eliminating itself from the face of the Earth.

Many a learning institution has failed because of lack of education on the part of those who have administered it. The education is not only of academic proficiency or professional skill; it is a matter of comprehention. This latter requirement is often the most difficult of all. Without comprehension one can go through the mechanical motions of serving with a certain blind trust in the final outcome, but the effort will probably fall short of the goal, as the goal must be seen clearly if it is to be attained at all.

Such institutions if they are to succeed with their possibilities need money. Without this vital ingredient, everything stagnates, as money is concretized energy, and energy is needed to move the work along. The other ingredient is comprehension — an understanding of needs to be accomplished and why. It is not too difficult to understand what a university is or should be. It is more difficult to understand why there is a need for a new kind of university for a new kind of world.

Has it occurred to the general population of the world — our world — that it is falling because somehow we have lost the true purpose of human existence. We have reached that unenviable place in our history, sad history, where we have learned to create destructivity. The whole world is an armed camp.

Our present centres of education, universities, dispense knowledge, but do not dispense direction. A university must be a civilization in miniature, symbolizing all that is good and proper in human life. They have microscopes to dissect the atom, and they have telescopes to analyze the stars, but they lack the imagination — or is it discrimination — to set the course of a civilization that is worthy of the name.

All this leads us to the conclusion that the World University must assemble the world's best minds, those who have outlived the old ways and practices and who are motivated to demonstrate in all walks of life a civilization that is human, compassionate, and sufficiently imaginative to extend the boundaries of the known to include such knowledge as is now impinging on the consciousness of the race. This is admittedly a big order, but nothing less than this will carry us through the impending transition from the violent world of today to the peaceful and constructive world tomorrow.

The Elite Minority — a handful of them only — with their background and some affluence, can set the start for it. Our ancient lands set the pace in 'thinking' before, let them do it again.

> **Nairangiye syasatey dauran to daikhiye,**
> **Manzil unhayn mili jo shareek safar na thay** (Mohsin)
> *Strange indeed are the ways of politics. — today,*
> *The destination was reached by those who were missing on the way.*

This book now ends as all books do some time or the other. But the story goes on because the struggle for freedom, of thought of human dignity and rights, and for the right to live according to one's belief and convictions, goes on. It is well to remember this particularly in our part of the world : Struggle maketh man. And remember :

> *Only those will get 'there',*
> *Who possess audacity and dare.*

SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Opinion is ultimately determined by the feelings, and not by the intellect. *(Herbert Spencer)*

The hour of departure has arrived and we go our ways — I to die, and you to live. Which is the better, God only knows. *(Socrates)*

Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done. *(George Bernard Shaw)*

We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it. *(George Bernard Shaw)*

That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach.

SOME FRIGHTENING PREDICTIONS

Nostradamus, the Astronomer-cum-Soothsayer who was an extraordinary man, who lived some five hundred years back, had made some predictions about the events likely to occur on this planet. Most of them came true but the one that concerns us all is what he predicted for 1994, 'when a holocaust and upheaval will come on this planet when East will fight West and most life will be destroyed'. He has termed this period as the Third World War which will last 2 to 27 years. He had predicted hundreds of years back both World War One and Two. This according to him will not be the end of life on this planet. He foresees Third War ending when the East and the West, which connect through the Icy northern areas, (U.S.S.R. and U.S.A.) will see the light of day and will call a halt and will bring peace throughout this planet. According to him that peace will last a thousand years after which he visualises the end of this planet. This is a grim prediction and not far away when most of us today may be effected by it. Every one should work towards Peace. Which can only come through tolerance and Belief in Something that can be imagined to be Good and Omnipotent — the Being, the ONE GOD.

Einstein whose mathematics took man to the moon has this to say about GOD that no one has seen yet. 'Subtle is the Lord...' seems to be his theme. He once wrote his personal creed — 'Science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind'. He explained further — 'A religious person is devout in the sense that he has no doubt of the significance of those super-personal objects and goals which neither require or are capable of rational foundation'. His was not a life of prayer or worship and yet he lived by a deep faith — a faith not capable of rational foundation that there are laws of Nature to be discovered. His life long pursuit was to discover them. His realism and his optimism are illuminated by his remark : 'Subtle is the Lord, but malicious HE is not'. When asked by a colleague what he meant by that he replied : 'Nature hides her secret because of her essential loftiness, but not by means of ruse'.

To understand this great genious one may think that one requires to be one himself. I do not agree. His thought is like a vast Ocean in which we can all take a dip from the shore, and derive pleasure according to our senses and needs. It could teach us Humanity and the belief that all Gods are the same and have the same GOD-HEAD. And were created to suit the conditions in the divided parts of the world we live in. But science has already brought this world closer and closer and we live in a world of 'World News'. Let us make a positive effort to create this 'One People' on this Earth — above colour, class, creed and country. We may then avoid this prediction of 1994. The world must not be allowed to become a huge Armed Camp, to blow itself up on the whims of one or two individuals who may have an urge or accidentally press the vital button which could let loose the array of destructive Weapons.

Na tha kuchh to Khuda tha,
Kuchh na hota to Khuda hota.
Doboya mujh ko hone nen,
Na hota men to keya hota. (A. K. G.)

If there had been nothing here,
There would still have been God there.
My irony of faith was that I was here,
If I had not been here what would have I been there ? *(S. A.)*

A number of people ask me today how do I spend my time these days.
My answer is very simple and the same to all —- preparing for the coming life.

I hope I have been able to make my point after relating this saga that wealth without struggle, and power without responsibility and pleasure without restraint are the destroyers of a persons character. Those who ruled 2/5th of India and 150 Million people died without a whimper. There is so much to learn from history but alas no one cares to do that, hence the state of affairs today — man has become a terribly sophisticated animal and the women a terrible inciter. We have come back to animal life but this time more sophisticated and so more deadly, and therefore it is the end of it all as far as I am concerned.

Guzari theen khushi ki chand gharian,
Unhee ki yad meri zindgi hai. (A. S.)
I had spent a few moments of happiness in life,
The memories of those is today my life. (S. A.)

The End — for the present !

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کتابخانہ / محمد ہارون موسی

THE AUTHOR

